REFERENCE LIBRARY OF
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
2 PARK STREET, BOSTON

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE SHELVES
EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF
THE LIBRARIAN

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.

Archive Collection

This book may not leave the Offices and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

The Riverside Classics

PICCIOLA

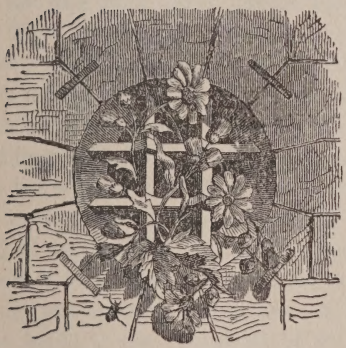
BY

X. B. SAINTINE

Translated from

A New Edition revised by the Author

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
LEOPOLD FLAMENG



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872, by
HURD AND HOUGHTON,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

DEDICATION.

TO MADAME VIRGINIA ANCELOT.

After reading over my book, I tremble to offer it to you. And yet who could so well appreciate it as yourself?

You do not like voluminous novels, nor long dramas. My book is neither a novel nor a drama.

The story which I am going to recount to you, Madame, is simple, so simple that perhaps never did pen broach a more limited subject. My heroine is so little a thing! not that I would beforehand, in case of failure, throw the fault upon her. God forbid! If in the work there is little action, the thought is not devoid of dignity, the aim is lofty, and if I have not reached it, it is because my strength is insufficient. I am not indifferent, however, to its success, for I have made it the repository of my most profound convictions; and actuated rather by a sentiment of benevolence than of vanity, I cannot but believe, although it may be rejected and disdained by the crowd of ordinary readers, that for some it may not be without a charm, and for others, not without profit.

That it is a record of facts, will give it value in your eyes. To its truthfulness I can certify, and offer it to you in compensation for whatever else you may find lacking.

In your memory lives that good and gracious lady, who died so few months since, the Countess of Charney, whose countenance, though veiled with sadness, was so striking from the heavenly imprint which it bore.

Her eye, so pure, so gentle, whose passing glance was a caress for those she loved, and whose lingering look caused the heart to dilate with pleasure, and turn again irresistibly to seek it once more. This look, ordinarily timid as that of a young girl, you have seen brighten, become animated, burn with ardor, and betray all at once sentiments of strength, energy, and devotion. This look was the woman. This woman was the most incredible mingling of sweetness and strength — of timidity and daring. She was a lioness that a child could quiet with a word — a dove that could feel a thunder-bolt without trembling, when her maternal love was called into action.

Such I knew her, and others had known her long before me, when the love that moved the springs of her being was that which she felt first for her father then for her husband. I delight to speak to you of this noble creature. The occasions will be too rare in which I shall be able to do so. But she is not the principal heroine of my story.

In the only visit which you made her at Belleville, which she had fixed upon as her permanent home, — for the tomb of her husband was there, (and now hers also,) — several things seemed to surprise you. First, the presence of an old white-haired servant seated by her side at table. You appeared, above all, astonished in hearing this servant, with manners brusk and rude, address with the familiar "thee and thou" the daughter of the Countess, and the young girl, elegant and refined, and beautiful as her mother had been, reply to the old man with deference and respect, even with affection, calling him by the title of godfather; in fact, she was his godchild.

Then perhaps you remember a dried and faded flower enclosed in a rich medallion, and the expression of sadness that overspread the features of the poor widow, when you questioned her about this relic. I believe she even left your question without response. That would have required a long time, and could not be given to an indifferent listener.

That response I am going to give you now.

Honored with the affection of this admirable woman, more than once, sitting between her and her old servant, opposite to this medallion, I have heard from both of them long and detailed narrations on the subject of that faded flower, which have deeply moved me. I have been allowed to keep for a long time the manuscripts of the Count, his correspondence, and his double journal in prison, on linen and on paper. I have not lacked abundant proofs and historic documents.

These narrations I have most carefully treasured in my memory; these manuscripts I have attentively examined; from the correspondence I have extracted precious fragments; from the journal I have drawn my inspiration; and if I succeed in imparting to your soul the sentiment which was stirred in mine by all these *souvenirs* of the captive, I shall have needlessly trembled for the destiny of my book.

Yet one word. I have retained for my hero his title of Count, at a time when such titles had ceased to be used. It is because I have always heard him so called both in French and Italian. In my memory his name and title are one, and together they have flowed from my pen.

Expect not then, Madame, in this volume the record of events of great importance, or the adventures of a lover. I have spoken of utility, — but to whom is a love-story useful? In this sweet knowledge, practice is worth more than theory, and each one has need of his own experience. That experience each one hastens to acquire for himself, and cares not to find it in books. The old, having become moralists from necessity, cry in vain, — "Avoid that rock on which we were once wrecked!" Youth replies, — "The sea on which you have sailed we too would brave in our turn, and we demand our right to shipwreck."

There is love in my story; but it is the love of a man for —— shall I tell you? No! Read, and you will know.

X. BONIFACE SAINTINE.

PICCIOLA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

Charles Véramont, Count of Charney, whose name is, doubtless, not yet wholly forgotten by the learned of our time, and might, if sought, still be found in the records of the imperial police, was endowed by nature with an uncommon capacity for study. Unfortunately, his intellect, under scholastic discipline, had taken a disputatious turn. He was more used to discussion than to observation, and so became rather a learned man than a philosopher. At twenty-five the Count was master of seven languages; but, unlike certain learned polyglots, who seem to have given themselves the trouble of acquiring foreign tongues for the express purpose of exhibiting their ignorance and emptiness to foreigners, as well as to their own countrymen, — (for one can be a dolt in many languages as easily as in one,) — Charney regarded his acquirements as a linguist only as preparation for other and higher studies.

While he possessed this body of servants at the command of his intellect, yet each had his duty, his

special business. With his servants, the Germans, he engaged in metaphysics; with the English and Italians, in politics and legislation; with all, in history, which he could investigate to its very origin, thanks to his Hebrew, his Greek, and his Roman servants.

Nor, in devoting himself to these serious studies, did the Count neglect the accessory sciences. But at length, alarmed at the extent of the vast horizon which seemed to expand as he advanced, finding himself stumble at every step in the labyrinth in which he was involved, weary of the fruitless search after truth that was never free from doubt, he came to look upon history as a vast lie, heaped up age after age, and attempted to reconstruct the edifice on a surer foundation. He composed a new historical romance, which the learned derided from envy, and society from ignorance.

Political and legislative science furnished him with more positive groundwork. But here all Europe was calling loudly for reform; and when he tried to point out some of the worst abuses, they seemed so rooted in the social system, so many destinies built up and riveted on false principles, that he was disheartened, feeling neither strength of mind nor insensibility of heart enough to overturn in other nations what the tornado of the Revolution had not entirely uprooted in his own.

Then, how many men, with as much intelligence and honesty as he, held theories totally opposed to

his own This thought humbled him more than did the errors of history, and left him in the most painful perplexity.

Metaphysics afforded him a last resource. In that world of ideas an overthrow appears less alarming, for ideas may clash without noise in imaginary space as a German poet has said. The silent thought has a sounding echo. In the world of metaphysics Charney believed that he would not expose to risk the peace of mind of his fellow-men, but he lost his own.

The farther he advanced in the mysteries of the science, the more deeply he became enveloped in darkness and confusion. Truth, ever flying at his approach, vanished even under his step, and mockingly seemed to flicker before his eyes like a will-o'-the-wisp, which allures only to mislead. He beheld it gleaming before him, and it vanished beneath his gaze, to reappear where he least expected. Untiring and unyielding, armed with patience, he followed it with stealthy steps, to seize it in its hiding-place, and in a flash it was away; he quickened his pace — at the first step it had fled. He thought at last he held it — it was under his hand — in his hand — it had already slipped through his fingers, dividing and multiplying itself into a thousand delusive particles. Twenty rival truths perplexed the horizon of his mind — false beacons that set his reason at defiance.

After being tossed about between Bossuet and Spinoza, between atheism and deism — bewildered among spiritualists, sensationalists, animists, ontolo-

gists, eclectics, and materialists, he took refuge in universal scepticism, desperately solving all doubts by universal negation.

Having set aside the doctrine of *innate ideas*, and the *revelation* of theologians, as well as the opinions of Leibnitz, Locke, and Kant, Count Charney shut himself up in gross pantheism, refusing to believe in one supreme intelligence. The disorder inherent in creation, the perpetual contradictions between ideas and things, the unequal distribution of strength and fortune among mankind, fixed in his mind the conviction that blind matter alone had created all, and alone organized and directed all.

Chance became his God, annihilation the object of his hope. He adopted his new creed with rapture, almost with triumph, as if he had himself created it, thinking himself happy in being freed by a sweeping incredulity from the doubts with which he had been besieged.

The death of a relative placed him in possession of a large fortune. He bade adieu to science, and determined to live for pleasure alone. Since the installation of the Consulate, society in France had been reorganized with its former habits of luxury and splendor. In the midst of the clarion of victory which was heard from all quarters at once, Paris was intoxicated.

Charney entered the world of wealth, the genial and dazzling world, the world of learning, wit, and grace; then in the midst of this life, at once idle and

occupied, in this grand rush for pleasure, he was filled with surprise that he could not think himself happy.

To dance at the sound of music, to look upon the adornment, and breathe the perfume exhaled by the beautiful women about him, seemed all that was worthy his attention.

He had sought the companionship of men noted for their learning and good sense; but how weak he found them, ignorant and steeped in error. He could only pity them.

This is one of the disadvantages of proficiency in human science; one no longer finds others at his own level; even those who know as much, know it in a different way. From the pinnacle to which one has mounted, those below look small and worthless; for in the hierarchy of intelligence, as in that of power, isolation is born of greatness. To live alone is the chastisement of whoever will raise himself too high.

Our philosopher called to his aid sensual pleasures. In society, which had been so long a stranger to joy and gayety, and was still defiled by the blood-stained orgies of the Revolution, now renewing its life, and outstripping at the first bound the ostentatious magnificence of the Regency, he signalized himself by the extravagance of his expenditure and his follies, — but all in vain.

He had horses, equipages, an open table; he gave concerts, balls, hunting-parties, but failed to secure

Pleasure as his guest. He had friends to flatter him in his triumphs, mistresses to love him in his moments of leisure, and although he put a high price on all this, he knew neither friendship nor love.

All this parade, all these parodies of a joyous life had not the power for a moment to cheer his heart or force from him a single smile. He endeavored in vain to allow himself to be blindly caught by the intoxicating allurements of society. The siren Pleasure, half out of the water, strove to charm the man by her beauty and her seductive voice, but the unwise glance of the philosopher plunged also, spite of himself, under the wave, to seek the scaly body and the forked tail of the monster!

Charney could neither be happy through truth nor error. To virtue he was a stranger; to vice, indifferent. He had proved the vanity of knowledge, and the bliss of ignorance was denied him. The doors of that Eden were forever closed behind him. Reason seemed to him false; pleasure, a liar. The noise of *fêtes* wearied him; solitude and silence were unendurable. In company he was weary of others; alone, he was weary of himself. A profound sadness took possession of him.

The demon of philosophical analysis, notwithstanding his efforts to exorcise it, always held dominion over his thoughts, disenchanting what should charm his eye, tarnishing, diminishing, and extinguishing the pleasures and the luxury in which he wished to live. The praises of his friends were to him only

the current coin with which they paid for the portion of his fortune which they took from him, and were only signs of their desire to feast at his banquets.

Decomposing everything, reducing everything to its first elements by this same principle of analysis, he became the prey of a singular malady; a frightful malady, more common than is known, which attacks the proud to humiliate them. He fancied that in the fine cloth of his garments he could detect the tainted odor of the animal from which the wool was shorn; under the silk of his rich hangings he saw crawling the disgusting worm which had spun it; his elegant furniture, carpets, the binding of his books, his trinkets of mother-of-pearl and of ivory, only suggested to him the remains and cast-off garments or dwellings of some animal; death! death! embellished and made productive by the toil of a squalid artisan. Illusion was destroyed, imagination paralyzed. But to him emotion was a necessity. That love which could find no single object upon which to fix itself, he expanded to embrace all mankind. He became a philanthropist.

To be useful to the men that he despised, he gave himself up anew to politics; not speculative, but active. He caused himself to be initiated into secret societies; he forced himself to feel again the only sort of fanaticism that remains for minds which have lost all illusions. In short, he became a conspirator; and against whom? Against the power of Bonaparte.

May it not have been that this patriotic love, this universal love which seemed to animate him, after all, at bottom, was only hatred for one single man, a man whose glory and success annoyed him?

Charney, the aristocrat, at last returned to the principle of equality; the proud nobleman from whom had been wrested his title of Count, which he held from his ancestors, did not choose that one should take with impunity that of Emperor, which could be held only from the sword.

It matters not what conspiracy this was. There was no lack of conspiracies at that epoch. I only know that this one was brooding from 1803 to 1804; but it was not suffered to break out. The police, that providence which watched over the destinies of the future empire, discovered it in time. Government decided to make no noise about it, not even to give it the honor of a discharge of muskets on the Plaine de Grenelle, the place of military execution. The heads of the conspiracy were surprised, seized in their own houses, condemned almost without trial, and separately distributed in the prisons, citadels, or fortresses of the ninety-six departments of consular France.

CHAPTER II.

I REMEMBER, when crossing the Alps into Italy, a tourist, travelling on foot, my knapsack on my shoul der, and alpenstock in my hand, stopping to gaze thoughtfully on a torrent near the pass of Rodoretto, swollen by the melting ice of the upper glaciers.

The noise of the waterfall, the foaming cascades throughout its course, the various colors with which the water was tinted, by turns yellow, white, and black, showing that it had forced its channel through beds of marl, lime, and slate ; — the enormous blocks of granite, which it had laid bare but not removed, each forming the centre of another cataract, adding roar to roar, cascade to cascade ; — entire trees, which it had uprooted, lying partly in and partly out of the water, the foliage of one half tossed by the violent wind, the other tortured by the dashing waves ; fragments of the banks clothed with verdure converted into islands, which floated on the surface of the torrent, broken in dashing against the trees, as the trees were torn and bruised in passing the blocks of marble and granite ; — all this roaring and clashing, all these sights and sounds confined between two narrow precipitous banks, held me a long time in agitated thought. This torrent is the Clusone.

Skirting its banks, I came with it into one of four valleys called "Protestant," in memory of the ancient Vaudois, who formerly took refuge there. Here my torrent had no longer its rapid and riotous gait, nor its hundred roaring voices. Flowing now quietly, decently, almost coquettishly, it took upon itself the air of a modest rivulet, as it caressed with its waves the walls of Fenestrella.

It was then that I first saw Fenestrella, celebrated for the forts which crown the two mountains between which the town is placed. These forts, which communicate by a covered way, had been partly dismantled during the wars of the republic. One of them, however, repaired and refortified, had become a prison of state when Piedmont was incorporated into France.

It was in this fortress of Fenestrella that Charles Véramont, Count of Charney, was confined, accused of having plotted to subvert the regular and legal government of his country, to substitute for it a *régime* of disorder and terror.

We see him then separated from men of pleasure and men of science, regretting neither; forgetting, without too much bitterness, that hope of political regeneration, which for the moment had seemed to reanimate his worn-out heart; bidding an adieu, forced, it is true, but full of resignation, to his fortune, whose pomp had never had the power to dazzle him, and to his friends, who wearied him; having for his abode, instead of his spacious and princely man

sion, a bare and gloomy chamber, and for his only valet, his jailer.

But what matter to him the gloom and nakedness of his apartment. The necessaries of life he had, and he was weary of its superfluities. His jailer even seemed to him endurable.

His thoughts alone weighed upon him. However what other diversion remained for him?

All correspondence with the outside world was interdicted. He was not allowed to have either books, pens, or paper. This the discipline of the prison required. In other times, this would have been no privation to him, when he was only anxious to escape from the perplexities of science by which he was beset. Now, a book would have given him a friend to consult, and more, an adversary to combat. Shut out from the world, he was thrown back upon himself, forced to live with his enemy — thought.

But how bitter and oppressive is that thought which continually speaks to him of his desperate position. How lifeless and heavy for him — for him whom nature had overwhelmed with her gifts, whom society had surrounded from his birth with her favors and privileges; for him, to-day a captive, and miserable; for him who has so much need of protection and aid, and who believes neither in the power of God, nor in the pity of men!

He tried again to rid himself of this argumentative demon, which alternately froze and scorched him, when, shut up to his reveries, he was a victim to its

struggles. Once more he would turn for thought to outward objects — to the material world. But, ah! how shrunk and narrow the world that met his eyes.

The room occupied by Charney was at the rear of the citadel, in a small building raised on the ruins of an ancient fortification, formerly connected with the defensive works, but which, in the rebuilding of the fort, was rendered useless.

Four walls newly whitewashed, so that they did not even yield him the amusement of recognizing the traces of those who had before been inmates of this place of desolation; a table, at which he could do nothing but eat; one chair, whose singleness seemed ever to remind him that never would any human being sit there beside him; a trunk for his clothing; a little sideboard of painted deal, partly worm-eaten, presented a striking contrast to an elegant dressing-case inlaid with silver, which was placed upon it, — the only remnant which was left him of his former luxury; a narrow bed, but clean; a pair of curtains of blue cloth, which hung at his window, — a derisive superfluity, a bitter raillery, for the closeness of the bars, and the high wall rising but a few feet opposite his window, left him little to fear from prying eyes or the importunity of the too ardent rays of the sun. Such was the furnishing of his chamber.

Over this room was another exactly like it, but unoccupied; he had no companions in this detached portion of the fortress. The rest of his world was

limited to a massive spiral stone stairway which led to a small paved court, sunk in one of the ancient moats of the citadel.

In this place, for two hours each day, he took as much exercise and enjoyed as much liberty as the rules prescribed by the commandant permitted. From this court the prisoner could look upon the summit of the mountains, and the vapors which rose from the plains; for the ramparts, lower at the east, allowed the air and sun to penetrate. But once more in his chamber, a horizon of masonry alone met his eye, in the midst of this sublime and picturesque scenery which surrounded him. At the right rose the enchanting green hills of Saluces; at the left, the last undulations of the valleys of Aosta, and the banks of the Chiara; before him were the marvellous plains of Turin; behind him, the Alps, rising one above another, adorned with rocks, forests, and abysses, from Mount Genevra to Mount Cenis, and he could see nothing, — nothing but a misty sky suspended over his head in a frame of stones, nothing but the pavement of his court and the bars of his prison, nothing but the high wall that faced his window, of which the wearisome uniformity was only broken towards its extremity by a small square window, at which, from time to time, through the bars, he had a glimpse of a sad and frowning face.

And this was the circumscribed world in which he must henceforward seek his diversions and find his joys. The effort taxed all his faculties.

He marked on his walls, with a bit of charcoal,

figures and dates which recalled to him the happy events of his youth. Alas! how small the number of them! He turned from these remembrances with a sinking heart.

Then the fatal demon of scepticism returned with ts desolating convictions, which he formed into phrases that he dared to inscribe on the walls, near the names of his mother and his sister.

Determined to triumph over his morbid abstraction and his torpid idleness, he tried to accustom himself to think of things puerile and frivolous; he hastened, of his own free will, to meet that brutishness which must result from a long sojourn in a prison; he plunged into it, he wallowed in it with frenzy.

The philosopher employed himself in ravelling the threads of silk or linen. The scholar made flageolets of straw, constructed vessels ornamented with flags from walnut-shells. The man of genius made whistles, carved boxes and open-work baskets from the stones of fruit. The revolutionist made chains and musical instruments from the elastic wire of his braces. For a while he delighted in his works; then disgust took possession of him, and he crushed them all under his feet.

To vary his occupation he carved upon his table a thousand odd designs. Never schoolboy cut his desk, or covered it with arabesques in relief or intaglio, with more patience and skill. The portal of the church of Caudebec, the pulpit of St. Gudule, at

Brussels, are not decorated with a greater profusion of carved figures. There were houses on houses, fishes on trees, men taller than the steeples, boats on roofs, carriages on the water, dwarf pyramids, gigantic flies; all this, horizontal, vertical, oblique, topsy-turvy, upside down, a true hieroglyphical chaos in which he forced himself sometimes to seek a symbolical sense, a connection, a design; for he who believed in chance as the moving power of the world might easily hope to find a complete poem in the sculptures on his table, or a design of Raphael in the mottled veins of a piece of box-wood.

He taxed his ingenuity to multiply difficulties to vanquish, problems to solve, enigmas to guess, and *ennui*, formidable enemy, came to surprise him in the midst of these grave employments.

The man whose face he had seen at the window at the extremity of the opposite wall might have furnished him, perhaps, with more real diversion; but this other prisoner seemed to avoid his notice, retiring from the grating as soon as the Count showed any signs of observing him. Charney conceived a hatred for him.

Such was his opinion of human nature, that nothing more was necessary than this avoidance of him to convince him that the unknown was a spy employed to watch his movements even in prison, or some old enemy rejoicing over his misery and humiliation.

On interrogating the jailer, however, he saw that his suspicions were false.

"He is an Italian," said he, "a good fellow, a good Christian, for I often find him at his prayers."

Charney shrugged his shoulders. "And why is he here?" asked he.

"He attempted to assassinate the Emperor."

"Is he, then, a patriot?"

"Patriot? oh no! but the poor man had a son and a daughter; now he has only a daughter — his son is dead in Germany — poor fellow!"

"It was a paroxysm of selfishness, then," murmured Charney.

"Zounds! you are not a father, Signor Count," replied the jailer. "If my little Antonio, who is still at the breast, had to be weaned for the good of the empire, which is not much older than he — but silence, I do not wish to lodge at Fenestrella without the keys at my girdle or under my pillow."

"And what are now the occupations of this bold conspirator?"

"He catches flies," said the jailer, with a jesting glance.

Charney no longer hated his neighbor; he despised him.

"He is then mad," cried he.

"Why mad, Signor Count? a later comer than he you have already become a master in the art of carving in wood. Patience."

Notwithstanding the irony of these last words, Charney resumed his manual labors, and the explanation of his hieroglyphics — remedies, alas! impotent against the pain with which he was tormented.

In these puerilities, in this weariness, passed all the winter.

Happily for him, a new subject of interest was soon to come to his aid.

CHAPTER III.

One day, at the prescribed hour, Charney was walking in the court-yard, his head bowed, his arms crossed behind his back, pacing slowly, as if he could so make the narrow space which he was permitted to perambulate seem larger.

Spring announced its coming; a softer air dilated his lungs, and to live free, and be master of the soil and of space, seemed to him the goal of his desires.

He counted one by one the paving-stones of his little court, without doubt to verify the exactness of his former calculations, for it was by no means the first time he had numbered them, when he perceived there, under his eyes, a little mound of earth raised between two stones, slightly opened at the top. He stopped; his heart beat without his being able to tell why. But all is hope or fear for a captive. In the most indifferent objects, and the most insignificant events, he seeks some hidden cause which speaks to him of deliverance.

Perhaps this slight derangement on the surface might be produced by some great work under ground perhaps a tunnel, which would open and make a way for him to the fields and mountains. Perhaps his

friends or his former accomplices were mining to reach him, and restore to him life and liberty.

He listened attentively, and fancied he heard a low, rumbling noise under ground; he raised his head, and the tremulous air bore to him the rapid stroke of the tocsin, and the continued roll of drums along the ramparts, like a signal of war. He started, and with a trembling hand wiped from his forehead great drops of sweat.

Was he to be free? Had France changed its master?

This dream was only a flash. Reflection destroyed the illusion. He had no accomplices, and had never had friends. He listened again; the same sounds struck his ear, but gave rise to other thoughts. This stroke of the tocsin, and the roll of the drum, were only the distant sound of a church-bell that he heard every day at the same hour, and the accustomed call to arms, which need only excite emotion in a few straggling soldiers of the citadel.

Charney smiled bitterly, and looked upon himself with pity, when he thought that some insignificant animal, a mole who had without doubt lost his way, or a field-mouse who had scratched up the earth under his feet, had caused him to believe for an instant in the affection of men, and the overthrow of a great empire.

In order, however, to make his mind quite clear about it, stooping over the little mound, he carefully removed some of the particles of earth, and saw with

astonishment that the wild agitation which had overcome him for an instant had not even been caused by a busy, burrowing, scratching animal, armed with claws and teeth, but by a feeble specimen of vegetation, with scarcely strength to sprout, weak and languishing.

Raising himself, profoundly humiliated, he was about to crush it with his heel, when a fresh breeze, laden with the perfume of honeysuckle and hawthorn, was wafted to him, as if to implore mercy for the poor plant, which perhaps one day would also have perfume to give him.

Another thought came to him to arrest his destructive intention. How was it possible for that little plant, so tender, soft, and fragile, that a touch might break it, to raise, separate, and throw out that earth dried and hardened by the sun, trodden under foot by him, and almost cemented to the two blocks of granite between which it was pressed?

He bent over it again and examined it with renewed attention. He saw at its upper extremity a sort of double fleshy valve, which folded over the first leaves, preserved them from the touch of anything that might injure them, and at the same time enabled them to pierce that earthy crust in search of air and sun.

Ah, said he to himself, behold all the secret. It receives from nature this principle of strength, as the young birds, who before they are born are armed with a bill hard enough to break the thick shell

which confines them. Poor prisoner, thou possessest at least the instruments which can aid thee to gain thy freedom.

He stood gazing at it a few moments, and no longer dreamed of crushing it.

The next day, in taking his ordinary walk, he was striding along in an absent-minded manner, and nearly trod on it by accident. He drew back quickly, and, surprised at the interest with which his new acquaintance inspired him, he paused to note its progress.

The plant had grown, and the rays of the sun had caused it to lose somewhat of its sickly palor. He reflected upon the power which that pale and slender stem possessed to absorb the luminous essence with which to nourish and strengthen itself, and to borrow from the prism the colors with which to clothe itself, colors assigned beforehand to each one of its parts. Yes, its leaves, without doubt, thought he, will be tinted with a different shade from its stem; and then its flowers, what color will they be? Yellow, blue, red? Why, nourished by the same sap as the stalk, do they not clothe themselves in the same livery? How do they draw their azure and scarlet from the same source where the other has only found a bright or sombre green? So it is to be, however; for notwithstanding the confusion and disorder of affairs here below, matter follows a regular though blind march. Blind, indeed, repeated he; I need no other proof of it than these two fleshy lobes

which have facilitated its egress from the earth, but which now, of no use in its preservation, nourish themselves still from its substance, and hang down, wearying it by their weight — of what use are they?

As he said this, day was declining, and the chilly spring evening approached; the two lobes rose slowly as he watched them, apparently desiring to justify themselves from his reproach; they drew closer together, and enclosed in their bosom, to protect it against the cold and the attacks of insects, the tender and fragile foliage which was about to be deprived of the sun, and who thus sheltered and warmed, slept under the two wings which the plant had just softly folded over it.

The man of science comprehended more fully this mute but decided response, in observing that the outside of the vegetable bivalve had been slightly cut by the nibbling of a snail the night before, of which the traces still remained.

This strange colloquy between thought on one side and action on the other, between the man and the plant, was not to end here. Charney had been too long occupied with metaphysical discussions to surrender himself easily to a good reason.

"This is all very well," said he; "here as elsewhere a happy concurrence of fortuitous circumstances has favored this feeble creation. It was born armed with a lever to lift the soil, and a buckler to protect its head, two conditions necessary to its ex

stence; if it had happened that these had not been fulfilled, the plant must have died, stifled in its germ, like myriads of other individuals of its species, whom Nature has no doubt created, unfinished, imperfect, incapable of preserving and reproducing themselves and who have had but an hour of life on earth. Who can calculate the number of false and impotent combinations Nature has made, before succeeding in producing one single specimen fitted to endure? A blind man may hit the mark, but how many arrows must he lose before he attains this result. For thousands of ages matter has been triturated by the double movement of attraction and repulsion; is it then strange that Chance should so many times produce the right combinations? I grant that this envelope can protect these first leaves, but will it grow and enlarge so as to shelter and preserve also the other leaves against the cold and the attacks of their enemies? Next spring, when new foliage will be born as fragile and tender as this, will it be here to protect it again? No! Nothing then has been planned in all this, nothing is the result of intelligent thought, but rather of a happy chance."

Sir Count, Nature has more than one response with which to refute your argument. Have patience, and observe that feeble and isolated production, sent forth and thrown into the court of your prison, perhaps less by a stroke of chance, than by the benevolent foresight of Providence. These excrescences in which you have divined a lever and a shield, had

already rendered other services to this feeble plant. After having served it as envelope in the frozen ground through the winter, the right time having arrived, they lent it their nourishing breast, as it were, suckling it when, a simple germ, it had not yet roots with which to seek moisture from the ground, or leaves to breathe the air and the sun. You were right, Sir Count; these protecting wings which have until now brooded so maternally over the young plant, will not be developed with it; they will fall, but not till they have accomplished their task, and when their ward will have gained strength sufficient to do without their aid. Do not be anxious about its future; Nature watches over this as over its sister plants; and as long as the north winds, the chilly fogs and snow-flakes, descend from the Alps, the new leaves yet in the bud will find there a safe asylum, a dwelling arranged for them, closed from the air by a cement of gum and rosin, which will expand according to their need, only opening under a favorable sky and atmosphere. They will not come out without a warm covering of fur, a soft cottony down which will defend them from the last frosts or any atmospheric caprices. Did ever mother watch more lovingly over the preservation of her child? Behold, Sir Count, what you might have known long since, if, descending from the abstruse regions of human science, you had deigned to lower your eyes to examine the simple works of God. The further north your steps had turned, the more these common marvels

would have manifested themselves to you. Where the danger is greater, there the cares of Providence are redoubled.

The philosopher had followed attentively all the progress and the transformations of the plant. Again he had contended with her by reasoning, and she had ever an answer for all his arguments.

"Of what use are these prickly hairs that garnish thy stem?" said he. And the next day she showed them to him covered with a slight hoar-frost, which, thanks to them, kept at a distance, had not chilled her tender skin.

"Of what use in the fine days will be your warm coat, wadded with down?"

The fine days arrived; she cast off her winter cloak to adorn herself with her spring toilet of green, and her new branches sprang forth free from these silken envelopes, henceforward useless.

"But if the storm rages the wind will bruise thee, and the hail will cut thy leaves, too tender to resist it."

The wind blew, and the young plant, too feeble yet to dare to fight, bent to the earth, and was defended in yielding. The hail came, and by a new manœuvre, the leaves rising along the stem, shielding it, pressed against each other for mutual protection, presenting only their underside to the blows of the enemy, and opposed their solid ribs to the weight of the atmospheric projectiles — in their union was their strength; this time the plant had

come forth from the combat, not without some slight mutilations, but alive and still strong, and ready to expand before the rays of the sun, which would heal her wounds.

"Is Chance then intelligent?" said Charney "must I spiritualize matter, or materialize mind?" And he did not cease to interrogate his mute instructress; he delighted to watch her growth, and mark her gradual metamorphoses.

One day, after he had contemplated it for a long time, he was surprised to find that he had been lost in thought, that his reveries had an unaccustomed tenderness, and that his happy thoughts continued during his walk in the court. Raising his head, he saw at the barred window of the great wall the "catcher of flies," who seemed to be observing him. At first he blushed, as if the man could read his thoughts, but then he smiled, for he no longer despised him. Had he the right to do so? Was not his mind also absorbed in the contemplation of one of the lowest ranks of creation?

"Who knows," said he, "but this Italian may have discovered in a fly as much worthy of study as I in my plant?"

On returning to his chamber, that which first struck his eye was this maxim of the fatalist, inscribed by him upon the wall two months before:

Chance is blind, and is the sole author of creation.

He took a bit of charcoal and wrote underneath PERHAPS!

CHAPTER IV.

Charney wrote no more upon his wall, and cut upon his table only growing stems protected by their cotyledons, only leaves with their serrated edges, and salient veins. He passed the greater part of his hours for exercise before his plant, examining and studying its development; and when again in his chamber, he would often, through the window-bars, still gaze upon it.

It is now the favorite occupation, the plaything, the whim of the prisoner. Will he tire of it as he has of others?

One morning from his window he saw the jailer, in rapidly crossing the court, pass so near to his plant, that it seemed in danger of being crushed by his foot. For the moment he shuddered with fear. When Ludovic came to bring him his pittance for breakfast, he determined to petition him to spare the only ornament of his walk; but he found it difficult to put in form a request so simple. Perhaps the discipline of the prison required that the court should be cleared of all vegetation. It was then a favor that he would ask, and he possessed little with which to repay it This Ludovic had already neavily taxed him, in ex

torting from him as much as possible, in payment for the articles that the jailer reserves the right of furnishing to the prisoners. Besides, Charney had rarely spoken to the man, whose brusque manners and sordid character repelled him. Without doubt he would find him little disposed to be agreeable to him. His pride made him shrink from appearing by his tastes to be on the same level with the fly-catcher, for whom he had so plainly shown his contempt. Then, after all, his request might be refused; for the inferior whose position gives him for the moment the right to grant or deny a favor, almost always uses his power with harshness, not knowing that indulgence belongs to strength.

A refusal would profoundly wound the pride and the hopes of the prisoner. It was, then, only after a host of oratorical precautions, and strengthening himself with all his philosophical knowledge of human weakness, that Charney broached his discourse, previously logically arranged, to gain his object without compromising his *amour propre*, or rather his vanity.

He commenced by addressing the jailer in Italian, thus awakening the *souvenirs* of childhood and nationality. He spoke to him of his son, his little Antonio. He knew how to touch the sensitive chord of his heart, and so force him to listen. Then he took from his elegant dressing-case a small silver-gilt goblet, and desired him to present it as his gift to his child. Ludovic smiled, but refused it.

Charney, though somewhat abashed, would not

consider himself defeated. He insisted by an adroit transition, saying, "I know that a toy, or rattle, or flower, would be a more suitable gift for the child, but you can sell the cup, my good man, and with the price purchase these for him. *A propos* of flowers," said he, — and behold him fairly launched into his subject.

Thus the great springs of human action — love of country, paternal love, personal interest — were all brought to bear upon the accomplishment of his object. Could more have been done if his own fate had been at stake? Judge, then, whether he already loved his plant!

"Signor Count," said Ludovic, when he had ceased to speak, "keep your goblet, lest the other bijoux in the case should miss it; you forget that my little boy, but three months old, has no need of a goblet to drink from; as to your gillyflower" —

"What! a gillyflower! Is it a gillyflower?" cried Charney, foolishly disappointed to have set his heart upon so common a flower.

"I am sure I do not know, Signor Count; to my eyes all plants are more or less gillyflowers. But since the preservation of this one is the matter in question, you are a little late in recommending it to my tender mercies. I should long ago have crushed it without any intention of hurting either you or it, if I had not noticed your tender interest in the pretty thing."

"Oh! that interest," said Charney, somewhat confused, "is a very simple thing."

"Tut, tut, tut, I understand that," replied Ludovic, with a wink of the eye, "occupation is a necessity to man; he must attach himself to something and prisoners have but few objects from which to make their choice. Among our inmates here, Signor Count, are those who were once, without doubt, grand personages, and learned men, (for they do not bring the small fry here). Now they amuse and occupy themselves with the most trivial things. One catches flies — there is no harm in that. Another," added he, with a wink of the eye, more significant than the first, "cuts and hacks with his penknife the deal table, without considering that I am responsible for the furniture of the place."

The Count would have spoken, but Ludovic gave him no opportunity. "Some," said he, "raise canary birds and goldfinches, and others white mice. I respect their fancies to that degree, that I have given away a superb white Angora cat, which was the pet of my wife and myself, lest this small game should prove too strong a temptation for it; and all the cats in the world are not worth a captive's mouse."

"You are very good, Monsieur Ludovic," said Charney, annoyed that any one should suppose that his tastes could descend to such puerilities — "but that plant is to me more than a diversion."

"What matter! if it only reminds you of the tree under which your mother rocked you in your infancy *per Bacco*, it may shade half the court-yard. My orders say nothing about it, so I will shut my eyes to it. Were it to become a tree and aid you to scale

the wall, that would be another thing; but we have time enough to think of that," said he, with a coarse laugh; "not that I do not wish you, with all my heart, the enjoyment of liberty and the free air, but it must come at the right time, according to rule, and with the permission of the authorities; if you should attempt to escape from the citadel" —

"What would you do?"

"What would I do! bar your passage, though you killed me; or order the sentinel to fire on you, with no more pity than if you were a rabbit, — that is the order, — but touch one of the leaves of your gilly-flower, no, no! Put my foot upon it, never! I have always regarded as a consummate rascal, and unworthy to be a jailer, the man who would maliciously crush the spider of a poor prisoner; it is an ugly action — yes, it is a crime."

Charney was at once surprised and touched to find so much sensibility in his guardian; and as his respect for him increased, his vanity was all the more determined to account by some sufficient reasons for his interest in the plant.

"My good fellow," said he, "I thank you for your good will; I acknowledge that this plant is for me the source of a multitude of philosophical observations, full of interest. I delight to study its physiological phenomena." And as he saw by the jailer's expression that he listened without understanding, he added, "besides, the species to which it belongs possesses medicinal virtues, particularly useful in a disease to which I am subject."

He lied; but it would have cost him too much to allow the man who had just begun to rise in his esteem, to think that he too had descended to the whimsical puerilities of the prison, — the only man who approached him, and who for him represented the whole human race.

"If your plant, Signor Count, has rendered you such service," replied Ludovic, as he prepared to leave the room, "you ought to show your gratitude to it by watering it sometimes; for if I had not taken care, in bringing water to you, to moisten it from time to time, the poor *picciola* would have died of thirst. Adieu, Sir Count."

"One instant, my good Ludovic," cried Charney more and more surprised to find such delicate instincts enclosed in so rough an exterior, and repenting that he had until now so wronged him. "What! you interest yourself thus in my pleasures, and yet are so silent before me. I pray you accept this little present as a souvenir of my gratitude. If hereafter I can more fully acquit myself to you, count upon me."

And he again presented him the goblet. This time Ludovic took it, and while examining it with a sort of curiosity, said, "Acquit yourself of what, Signor Count? Plants ask nothing but water, and one can give them a drink without ruining one's self at the inn. If this one diverts you a little from your troubles, if it produces something of use to you enough is said."

And he went at once and replaced the goblet in its case.

The Count stepped towards Ludovic and offered him his hand.

"Oh, no, no!" said he, drawing back with a constrained but respectful air; "one only gives his hand to his equal or his friend."

"Well, Ludovic, be my friend."

"No, no!" said the jailer, "that cannot be, *Excellenza*. It is necessary to foresee all, that one may be able to fulfil his duties conscientiously to-morrow as well as to-day. If you were my friend and tried to give us the slip, should I have courage to cry to the sentinel, 'fire!' No, I am your guardian, your jailer, your most devoted servant."

CHAPTER V.

After the departure of Ludovic, Charney reflected, and thought how, notwithstanding all his personal advantages, in all the relation between them, he had shown himself inferior to this man. To what miserable subterfuges had he resorted to surprise the heart of this simple and kindly being! he had not even hesitated to descend to a falsehood.

How thankful he was to him for the secret cares lavished upon his plant. What! this jailer, supposed capable of a refusal, when only the refraining from an unkind action was in question, had anticipated his wishes; he had been a spy upon him, not to sneer at his weakness, but to favor his pleasures. His disinterestedness forced the proud Count to acknowledge himself his debtor!

The hour for his exercise having arrived, he does not forget to share with his plant the portion of water which is allowed him. Not content with watering it, he takes care to free it from the dust which tarnishes its leaves, and the insects which attack it.

While thus occupying himself he thinks of Ludovic, and desires to know him better, to seek an explanation of the singular contrasts which the character of this man present, at the same time rude and

good-natured, pitiless and tender-hearted, niggardly and disinterested.

He who had formerly been so much occupied with the study of the fall of old empires, the migration of races, the exploits and conquests of Cyrus, Alexander, and Gengis-Khan, asked nothing more of the great history of the world than the history of his jailer. By means of questions, suppositions, and logical deductions, this is what he learned from Ludovic himself.

Ludovic Ritti, a Piedmontese, was born at Nice, a compatriot and contemporary of Masséna. They were both children of the same quarter of the town, comrades in school, and out of school next-door neighbors.

Yet from their earliest youth, in accordance with their different natures, if they played *horse*, Ludovic was the horse, and Masséna the driver; if they were to take the fruit from a neighbor's orchard, Ludovic served as the ladder by which Masséna climbed the wall, and the climber knew very well how to reserve for himself the lion's share; if they went poaching in the woods, Ludovic beat the bushes, while Masséna was the hunter.

Thus the two companions had grown up together, had been vagabonds together, then together they had enlisted as soldiers in the service of the Republic, and together they had taken their letters of naturalization, — not in the ordinary manner, by declaring themselves French, but in aiding the conquest which declared France their own country.

At this epoch, it is true, Masséna wore already the badge of *general of division*, while Ludovic still preserved his first woollen epaulettes: one had been born to dominion and command, the other to obedience.

Yes, obedience, passive, blind, complete, was in Ludovic a second nature, an instinctive necessity. He was a simple machine of war, moving only by the will of another. The orders of his superior officer seemed to him like the orders of God himself; his motions were so entirely regulated by orders, that, in the height of the battle, even with the pistol of an enemy at his breast, he would have remained with his sabre in the air, without striking, if a signal had announced to him the end of hostilities.

Although brave, very brave, Ludovic had never allowed himself to be carried away by his ardor, and would never have broken the ranks by a foot's length. If he had not signalized himself by any striking action during his campaigns, it was because he had not received the order to do so.

If, in place of his ration of brandy, his sergeant had offered him a glass of ink to drink, saying, "It is the order," he would have swallowed it without a frown.

In the terrible year '95, in the midst of the snows of the Alps, when he and his companions marched with bare feet and empty stomachs, Ludovic quietly said, "It is the order!"

Wounded at Marengo, slightly lamed by a ball which lodged in the flesh of his thigh, Ludovic was forced to retire from the service.

Great then was his embarrassment. He had only gained, during his campaigns and his sojourn in Germany, Italy, and various parts of France, a marvellous facility in swearing in four or five different idioms.

Again at Nice, his native place, condemned to a sedentary life, abandoned to himself, with no impetus from without, he knew not how to arrange his movements, or what rule to impose upon his conduct.

He had no other diversion, no other pleasure, no other happiness, but to see the parade of the garrison, and to march with limping step after the guard.

He went to bed every night at the beat of the tattoo; but for his awaking, for his repasts, the drum no longer sounded for him; for the ordinary acts of life there was no one to cry to him, "Right! Left! Forward!" What should he do with an existence that he must direct himself, and of which he must give himself all the trouble? Obedience is so sweet to inactive minds! And the habit of obedience makes it a necessity.

In order to escape from this perplexing situation, Ludovic took a grand resolution.

He married.

Into his domestic economy he carried the same passive obedience that had distinguished him in the army. As if all happiness was to come to him at

the same time, the office of jailer at Fenestrella, just then becoming vacant, was given to him, through the influence of his old comrade Masséna. He had then two superior officers, in place of one, — his wife and his commandant.

His wife, younger than himself, passed, notwithstanding an enormous *goître*, for a tolerably good-looking girl when he married her; but being of a crabbed disposition and sordidly avaricious, she had forced Ludovic, who was naturally disinterested, to overcharge the prisoners on all the articles which the jailer was allowed to furnish them. But beyond that, notwithstanding the wishes of his wife, he would not accept from them the slightest gift. This refusal could only happen in the interior of the prison, away from his wife's cognizance; that was his own affair; besides, it was the order.

There were then three distinct shades of character impressed upon Ludovic, — by his commandant, his wife, and his own instincts. Unsparing when the discipline of the citadel was in question, *voilà* his commandant; avaricious with the prisoners, *voilà* his wife; but good, sensible, generous, compassionate, when the commandant or the good woman of the house did not breathe upon his heart to make it hard or avaricious, *voilà* himself.

If a more complete portrait of Ludovic Ritti is desired, he was forty years of age, his complexion dark, his beard thick, his shoulders broad, his frame strong, and of middle height.

Picture him to yourself crossing, with a somewhat uncertain step, the courts of the citadel, smoking a short black pipe, letting slip frequently an oath, French, Provençal, Italian, or German, slightly winking his eye when he wished to give himself malicious air, quickly brightening at the mention of the name of his son Antonio, or at the thought of a good action, and you know as much of him as Charney himself could learn.

One day soon after, at the appointed hour, Charney was at his post near his plant, when he saw a heavy black cloud obscuring the sun, hanging like a gray floating dome over the towers of the fortress. Soon large drops of rain began to fall; he started to go quickly under shelter, when hail-stones mingled with the rain pattered on the pavement of the court. *La povera*, whirled and twisted by the storm, seemed on the point of being uprooted from the earth; her wet leaves fretting one against the other, trembling with the tossing of the wind, uttered, as it were, plaintive murmurs and cries of distress.

Charney paused. He remembered the reproaches of Ludovic, and looked eagerly around for some object with which to protect his plant; he found nothing; the hail-stones became larger and fell more quickly, and threatened its destruction. He trembled for her, for her whom he had seen so lately resist so well the violence of the wind and the hail; but now he loved his plant too well to suffer it to run any risk of injury, for the sake of getting the better of it in an argument.

Taking, then, a resolution worthy of a lover, worthy of a father, he drew near, he placed himself before his *protégée*, and interposed himself as a wall between her and the wind; he bent over her, serving as a shield against the shock of the hail; and there, motionless, panting from his struggles with the storm, from which he sheltered her, protecting her with his hands, with his body, with his head, with his love, he waited till the cloud had passed.

The storm was over. But might not a similar danger menace it when he, its protector, was held from it by bolts and bars. Moreover, the wife of Ludovic, followed by a large dog, sometimes came into the court. This dog in his gambols might, with one snap of his mouth, or a stroke of his paw, destroy the darling of the philosopher. Charney spent the rest of the day in meditating upon a plan, and the next day prepared to put it in execution.

The small portion of wood allowed him was scarcely enough for his comfort in this climate, where the evenings and mornings are so chilly. What matter? Has he not the warmth of his bed. he can retire earlier and rise later. In this way, sparing his wood, he soon amassed enough for his purpose. When Ludovic questioned him about it, he said, "It is to build a palace for my mistress." The jailer winked his eye, as if he understood; but he did not.

During this time Charney split, shaped, and pointed his sticks, laid together the most supple branches

preserved carefully the flexible osier which was used to tie together his daily bundle of fagots. Then he found the lining to his trunk to be of a coarse, loosely woven fabric, which he detached, and from it drew the coarsest and strongest threads. His materials thus prepared, he set himself bravely to work as soon as the laws of the jail, and the scrupulous exactness of the jailer, would allow.

Around his plant, between the pavement of the court, he carefully inserted sticks of various sizes, making them firm at their base by a cement composed of earth, gathered bit by bit, here and there in the interstices between the stones, and of plaster, and saltpetre, purloined from the old moat of the castle. The principal frame-work thus arranged, he interlaced it with light twigs, thus making a sort of hurdle, capable, in case of need, of protecting *la povera* from any blow, or the approach of the dog.

He was greatly encouraged during his work to find that Ludovic, who, at the commencement, shaking his head with a low grumbling sound of evil augury, had seemed uncertain whether to allow him to continue his work, had now decided in his favor; and sometimes, while quietly smoking his pipe, leaning against the door at the entrance of the court, he would smilingly watch the inexperienced worker; occasionally taking his pipe from his mouth to give him some counsel, which Charney did not always know how to profit by.

But inexpert as he was, his work progressed. In

order to complete it, he impoverished himself, by robbing his scanty bed of straw with which to make a sort of matting to use when needed for the protection of his tender plant from the sharp gusts of Alpine wind which threatened it on one side, or the mid-day rays of the sun reflected from the granite.

One evening the wind blew violently. Charney from his window saw the court strewed with bits of straw and little twigs. The matting of straw and the twigs had not been firmly enough bound to resist the wind. He promised himself to repair the misfortune the next day; but the next day when he descended it was all rebuilt. A hand more skilful than his had firmly interlaced the straw and the branches, and he knew well who to thank in his heart.

Thus, against all peril, thanks to him, thanks to *them*, the plant was sheltered by rampart and roof; and Charney became more and more warmly attached to it, watching with delight its growth and development, as it unceasingly opened to him new marvels for admiration.

Time gave firmness and solidity to the plant; the covering of the stem, at first so delicate, gave, from day to day, assurance of increasing fitness to endure, and the happy possessor of the plant was seized with a curious and impatient desire to see it blossom.

At last, then, he desired something; this man of a worn-out heart and frozen brain; this man so priding himself in his intellect, stoops from the proud heights of science to be absorbed in the contemplation of an herb of the field.

But do not hasten to accuse him of puerile weakness or of lunacy. The celebrated Quaker, John Bertram, after having passed long hours in examining the structure of a violet, determined to devote the powers of his mind to the study of the vegetable wonders of nature, and so gained a place among the masters of science.

If a philosopher of India became mad in seeking to explain the phenomena of the sensitive plant, perhaps Charney, on the contrary, will learn from his plant true wisdom. Has he not already found in it the charm which has the power to dissipate his *ennui*, and enlarge his prison?

"Oh, the flower! the flower!" said he, "that flower whose beauty will expand only for my eyes, whose perfume will exhale for me alone, what form will it take? What shades will color its petals? Without doubt it will offer me new problems to solve, and throw a last challenge to my reason. Well! Let it come! Let my frail adversary show herself armed at all points, I will not shrink from the contest. Perhaps only then shall I be able to comprehend, in her completeness, that secret which her imperfect formation has thus far hidden from me. But wilt thou flower, — wilt thou show thyself to me one day in all the glory of thy beauty and its adornment, Picciola?"

Picciola! that is the name by which he called her when, in the necessity of hearing a human voice he conversed aloud with the companion of his cap

tivity, while lavishing upon her his cares. *Povera Picciola!* (poor little one) such had been the exclamation of Ludovic, moved with pity for the poor little thing, when it had nearly died for want of water Charney remembered it.

"Picciola! Picciola! wilt thou flower soon?" repeated he, while carefully opening the leaves at the extremities of the stems, to see if there was any promise of blossom. And this name, Picciola, was very pleasant to his ear, for it brought to his mind, ot once, the two beings who peopled his world, — his plant and his jailer.

One morning, when at the hour of his daily promenade, he interrogated Picciola, leaf by leaf, his eyes were suddenly arrested by something peculiar in its appearance; his heart beat violently, he laid his hand upon it, and the blood suffused his face. It was a long time since he had experienced so keen an emotion. That which he saw was at the end of the main stem, a new excrescence, green, silky, of a spherical form, covered with delicate scales placed one upon the other, like the slates upon the rounded dome of a kiosk.

He cannot doubt — it is the bud — the flower will soon be here.

CHAPTER VI.

The fly-catcher, who often came to his window seemed to take pleasure in watching the Count, so busy about his plant. He had seen him mix and prepare his mortar, braid his mats, tie his osiers, and at last erect his palisades, and, prisoner like him, and for a yet longer time, he could easily sympathize in thought with the entire preoccupation of the philosopher.

And now, at that same barred window, another face, fresh and smiling, appears. It is the face of a woman, — a young girl, with an air at the same time timid and lively; the carriage of her head and the sparkle of her eyes showed that her vivacity was only tempered by her modesty: her glance, full of soul and expression, was partly veiled by her long drooping lashes. Standing in the shadow of the heavy grating, her head bent in an attitude of reverie, her fair hand leaning upon the bars for support, one might easily take her for a personification of captivity. But when she raises her brow, and the light falls upon it, the harmony and serenity of her features, and the richness and freshness of her complexion, give assurance that she has been nurtured in liberty of action and in the free air, and not under bolt and bar.

Is she then one of those angels of charity who visit those who are sick and in prison? No; filial love has, until now, wholly filled her heart; it is from that love that she has drawn her strength, and even her beauty. Daughter of Girhardi, the Italian, the catcher of flies, she had left the fêtes and gay promenades of Turin, to take up her residence in the little town of Fenestrella; not, at first, that she might see her father, for that permission was not granted her, but that she might breathe the same air with him, and be near him, while thinking of him. Now she has obtained, by persistent entreaties, liberty to visit him from time to time, and that is the reason that she is joyous, animated, and beautiful.

Curiosity has led her to the window which looks upon the court; a sentiment of interest holds her there, notwithstanding she fears to be noticed by the prisoner. Let her be reassured; Charney will not see her; at this moment Picciola and her incipient bud wholly absorb his attention.

The following week, when the young girl came again to visit her father, as she went towards the window to look at the other prisoner, Girhardi said, "For three days he has not been near his plant; the poor man must be very ill."

"Ill!" said she, with emotion.

"I have seen physicians crossing the court, and from what Ludovic tells me, they seem to agree only on one point — that he may die."

"Die!" exclaimed the young girl, with dilated eye

and terror rather than pity expressed in her face. "Oh the unfortunate man! how I pity him!" Then fixing upon her father a look of solicitude and anguish, "Then one can die here; or rather, can one live? It is, without doubt, the confinement of the prison, and the pestilential air that rises from the old moats, that have caused his illness," cried she, clasping the old man in her arms, for while speaking of Charney she thought only of her father.

Girhardi strove to console her, while she covered his hand with tears.

At this moment Ludovic entered. He brought to the "catcher of flies" a new capture which he had made for him. It was a golden-winged beetle, which he presented with a triumphant air. Girhardi smiled, thanked him, and when unobserved by Ludovic, gave the insect its liberty; it was the twentieth individual of the same species that Ludovic had brought him within a few days.

He profited by the opportune entrance of Ludovic to inquire after Charney.

"By my patron saint!" said Ludovic, "I do not forget him any more than the others, and until God shall take him into his own keeping, he is my care; so I have just been watering his plant."

"Ah, but of what use is that, if he will never see a flower?" sadly asked the young girl.

"Ah! young lady," said Ludovic. Then he added with his customary wink of the eye, emphasizing his words with a motion of his raised forefinger, — "Our seigneurs the physicians think that the poor

man is on his back forever; but I, the seigneur jailer, do not believe it: I have my secret."

And turning on his heel he went out, after having tried to put on his rough voice and his stern face to notify the young girl that only twenty-two minutes remained of the time allotted for her visit. In exactly twenty-two minutes he returned and executed the order.

The illness of Charney was only too real. One evening, on reëntering his room after having paid his visit to Picciola, and bestowed upon her his daily care, he was attacked by a slight faintness. His head heavy and his limbs trembling, he threw himself upon his bed, disdaining to call any one to his aid, and trusting to sleep to cure him.

But instead of sleep came pain; and the next day, when the Count wished to rise, a stronger power than his will nailed him to his pallet. He closed his eyes and resigned himself to his weakness.

In the face of danger the calm of the philosopher and the pride of the conspirator returned. He would have thought himself dishonored by a murmur or a complaint, or an appeal for aid to those who had caused his sequestration from the world. He simply gave some directions to Ludovic, with regard to the care of his plant in case he should be indefinitely kept a prisoner in his bed,—in this double incarceration which came to aggravate his original captivity Physicians were called in, and he refused to answer their questions. It seemed to him that, his life being no longer his own, he was no more responsible for

its preservation than for the administration of his confiscated property, and that it belonged to those who had appropriated all to watch over all.

At first the physicians insisted upon an answer, but finding him persistently silent, they determined in future only to interrogate his disease.

The symptoms of the disease replied to each one with diverse meaning, for each of them held to a different system. In the dilation of the pupil, and the purple hue of his lips, one saw certain symptoms of a putrid fever; the other, of inflammation of the bowels; and the last, (for there were three of them) decided that it was a case of apoplexy or paralysis, from the color of the neck and temples, the coldness of the extremities, the rigidity of the features, and declared that the silence of the patient was only to be attributed to the commencement of congestion of the brain.

Twice the colonel in command of the citadel came to visit the prisoner in his chamber. The first time he asked him if he had any request to make; he even offered to change his lodging if he thought that the situation was the cause of his illness. The Count only replied by a negative sign.

The second time he came accompanied by a priest. Charney, given over by the physicians, it was the duty of the commandant to prepare the prisoner to receive the last offices of religion.

If, in the offices of the Church, there is one function more august and sacred than another, it is that of the priest of prisons, — this priest the only specta-

tor whose presence sanctifies the scaffold; and yet the scepticism of our age has not feared to make him the object of its bitter railleries. "Steeled by habit," they say, "these men are no longer capable of emotion, they cannot weep with the guilty, and in their exhortations and their consolations, incessantly expressing the same thoughts, professional routine destroys inspiration."

What matter if the phrases are the same? Does the same man listen to them twice? A professional routine, do you say? But this profession — they have chosen it — they endure it. They, with hearts pure and virtuous, choose to live among hardened spirits, who reply perhaps to their words of peace and hope and brotherly kindness by words of insult and contempt. They might, as well as you, have lived in the enjoyments and luxuries of this world; they bring themselves in contact with rags, and breathe the humid and infected air of dungeons. Born, also, with sensitive hearts, and with that horror of blood and of death which belongs to human nature, they voluntarily condemn themselves to see, a hundred times in their lives, rise and fall the bloody knife of the guillotine. Are these, then, voluptuaries, and dare we so freely censure them?

In place of this man of sorrows, devoted beforehand and forever to functions so trying — in the place of this man who has voluntarily made himself the companion of the executioner, bring a new priest for each new criminal.

Yes, without doubt his emotions will be more excited, he will weep more, but he will console less. His words, if indeed he is able to speak, will be broken with sobs. Will he be master of himself and of his thoughts? Will not his too keen emotion render him incapable of fulfilling his duty, and will the sight of his weakness give the culprit strength courageously to give his life to society in expiation of his crime?

If the fortitude of the new consoler is such, that on the first trial he shows neither emotion nor weakness, you may be sure that he is a thousand times more insensible by nature than the other by habit.

Do you, then, wish to abolish this office of priest of prisons? Ah! take not their last friend from those who are condemned to die! In mounting the scaffold let the repentant culprit have a cross before his eyes, that so he may not see the fatal axe; or, at least, let his last look show him, by the side of the minister of man's justice, the minister of God's mercy!

Thank Heaven, the priest called to the bedside of Charney, one truly worthy of his name, had not such painful duties to perform. A man of enlarged mind, he comprehended, from the silence and immobility of the sick man, and still more from the desolating inscriptions that he read upon the walls, how little he had to hope from this proud spirit.

He passed the night in prayer at his bedside, only interrupting his pious office to aid Ludovic in the

cares which he lavished upon the sufferer, awaiting with patience a favorable moment when he could lighten, with a ray of hope, these profound shadows of incredulity.

During this critical night, the blood determining to the brain, caused a violent delirium, so that for more than an hour it required the united efforts of the priest and the jailer to prevent the patient from throwing himself out of bed. And while he struggled in their arms, in the midst of a crowd of incoherent words, of sentences without connection, of wild apostrophes, the words, "Picciola! poor Picciola!" were uttered again and again by Charney.

"I must go! I must go! the moment has come!" murmured Ludovic, "yes, it has come," repeated he, with impatience; "but how can I leave the chaplain alone to struggle with this madman! And perhaps in an hour it will be too late! Oh, Holy Virgin! I believe that he is becoming calmer — yes, he closes his eyes, his arms drop. If, on my return, he is not dead, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

In fact, the delirium of the patient had subsided; Ludovic charged the priest to watch over him, and quickly disappeared from the chamber.

In that chamber, dimly lighted by the feeble glimmer of a flickering lamp, no sound was heard but the irregular respiration of the dying man, the murmured prayers of the priest, and the whistling of the wind from the Alps between the prison-bars. Twice only the sound of a human voice mingled with these

monotonous sounds. It was the *Qui vive?* of the sentinel when Ludovic passed and repassed the postern in entering his lodge and returning to the room of the sick man.

Scarcely a half hour had passed when he reëntered, carrying in his hand a cup of steaming liquid

"I came near killing my dog," said he, as he came in "He commenced howling, which is an evil omen. But how is he? has he made any sign? But at any rate I have here that which will quiet him I have just tasted it — it is bitter enough — pardon, father, but taste it yourself."

The priest gently put aside the offered cup.

"Well, after all, it is not for us; a pint of muscatel, with plenty of slices of lemon, would be better suited to sustain us during the chilly night; is it not so, signor chaplain? But this is for him, for him only. He must drink it — he must drink every drop of it — that is the prescription."

And as he spoke he poured the liquid from one cup to another, blowing it to cool it; and when he thought it at the proper temperature, he forced Charney to swallow it, while the priest supported his head. Then covering him closely, "We shall soon see the effect," said he, "and, at any rate, I don't stir from here until the thing is settled. All my birds are caged, and will not fly away. What do you say, signor chaplain?" — "I ask pardon, father," said he, in answer to an almost imperceptible gesture of reprimand from his more discreet companion And La

dovic stationed himself, silent and immovable, by the side of the bed, his eyes fixed upon the dying man, holding his breath in his anxious watching for the coming event.

Not perceiving any effect, he repeated the dose, and again watched in silence. Still perceiving no change in the condition of the patient, he began to be alarmed lest by his imprudence he had hastened his death. He paced the room, stamping his foot, snapping his fingers, and menacing with clenched fist the cup which had contained the liquid.

Suddenly he stopped to gaze upon the pale and rigid face of Charney. "I have killed him," said he, with a frightful oath, a mixture of French, Italian, and Provençal.

At the sound of such language the priest raised his head, but Ludovic, paying no attention to his silent reproof, continued to walk, to stamp his feet, to swear, to snap his fingers again and again; then at last, worn out with action and emotion, he sank on his knees beside the priest, murmuring his *mea culpa*, and fell asleep in the midst of a prayer.

At dawn of day he still slept — the chaplain still prayed. A burning hand placed on the head of Ludovic caused him to start from sleep.

"Something to drink," said the sick man.

At the sound of this voice, which he had feared never to hear again, Ludovic opened wide his eyes and gazed with stupefaction upon Charney, whose face was moist, and his body in a bath of perspira

tion. Whether nature, aided by the vigorous temperament of the prisoner, had brought about a salutary crisis, or the double dose administered by Ludovic was gifted with a sudorific power, this profuse perspiration seemed to have at once restored the sick man to life and reason. He gave orders himself as to the means to be used for his restoration. Then turning to the priest, who still knelt humbly at the bedside,

"I am not dead yet, sir, you see," said he. "If I recover, as I hope that I shall, I beg you to say for me to my trio of doctors, that it is not to them that I render thanks, and that they may spare me their visits and their science, senseless and lying like all others. I understood enough of their discourse to know that to a happy chance alone am I indebted for my recovery."

"Chance," murmured the chaplain, his eyes fixed upon the sentence inscribed upon the wall; "chance is blind, and the sole author of creation." Then pronouncing solemnly the last word, that Charney himself had added, —

"Perhaps!" said he, and went out.

CHAPTER VII.

In the intoxication of delight, Ludovic seemed plunged in a stupor of ecstasy upon hearing the Count speak; not that he paid the least attention to the meaning of his words, — that was of no consequence, — but his dying man spoke, put together ideas, lived! This was the cause of his emotion, and of his overflowing satisfaction and pride. After several moments of silent wonder, he exclaimed, — "*Vivat! vivat!* what a wonder! He is saved! thanks to whom?" And he waved in the air the empty earthern cup, kissing it, and addressing to it the most tender words in his vocabulary.

"Thanks to whom?" said the prisoner; "thanks to your good care, my honest Ludovic, perhaps. But if I am really cured, the doctors will none the less attribute it to their prescriptions, and the priest to his prayers."

"Neither they nor I shall have the glory of it, replied Ludovic, more and more excited. "As to the chaplain — who knows? his prayers could only do good — but the other, the other!"

"Who then is this savior, this unknown protector?" said Charney, with a sort of indifference, for he thought that Ludovic attributed his cure to some saint.

"It is not a protector," said he, "but a protectress."

"Ah, you mean the Madonna?"

"No, it is not the Madonna, Signor Count. She who has saved you from death is first and before all the Signora Picciola! the Signorina Picciolina! Piccioletta! my goddaughter — yes, my goddaughter, for it is I who first gave her her name — her name of Picciola! Have you not said so? Is she not then my godchild? and am I not her godfather? and proud I am of it, *per Bacco!*"

"Picciola!" cried the Count, starting up and resting his elbow on his pillow, a look of most lively interest reanimating his countenance. "Explain, my good Ludovic, explain yourself."

"You may affect astonishment," replied he, with a wink of his eye, "as if it was the first time she had rendered you this service. When you are attacked by this disease to which you are subject, is it not always with this plant that you are cured? You told me so, and, thank God, I remembered it; for it seems that Picciola had more knowledge of the case in one of her leaves than all the square-capped doctors of Montpellier and of Paris combined. Yes, my little goddaughter in this affair would have defied a whole regiment of doctors — four battalions, four hundred men in each! In proof of it, your three ignoramuses gave way, in beating a retreat, throwing the blanket over your face, as if you were a dead man; while Picciola — ah, the brave little plant

may God preserve her seed! — (as for me, I shall take care not to forget the receipt, and if ever my little Antonio falls ill, he shall drink a broth, and eat a salad of it, though it is as bitter as chicory,) — she had only to show herself, and behold! a complete victory! Since you are cured, yes, cured, for now you open your eyes wide — you laugh. Ah! *vivat l'illustrissima Signora* Picciola!"

Charney took pleasure in the noisy and loquacious joy of his worthy guardian. His return to life, and the idea of owing it to that same plant which had already charmed the long hours of his captivity, gave birth in him to a lively sentiment of happiness, and brought a smile to his still feverish lips, when suddenly a cruelly painful idea crossed his mind.

"But how, my good Ludovic," said he, "has this plant contributed to my cure? How did you use it?" and a kind of terror agitated him as he asked the question.

"Nothing more simple," quietly replied the jailer; "a pint of water over a good fire — three bubbles — the decoction is made; that is all."

"Good God!" cried Charney, sinking back upon his pillow and pressing his hand to his brow, "you have destroyed it! I cannot reproach you, my good Ludovic, but oh, my poor Picciola! what shall I do? what will become of me without her?"

"Come, come, calm yourself," said Ludovic, coming near him, and assuming a voice almost paternal, to console the captive, overpowered with grief, like a

child from whom one is about to take a favorite plaything. "Be calm, and do not uncover yourself as you are doing. Listen to me," added he, all the time occupied in adjusting the coverings and remedying the general disorder of the bed, caused by the abrupt movements of the sick man. "Should I have hesitated to sacrifice an herb to save a man? What do you think? However, I could not decide to kill her at one blow, and plunge the whole of her into the kettle. Besides, that would have been useless. I only begged a loan from her. With my wife's scissors I clipped a quantity of leaves, of which she had no need; some little branches without buds — for now she has three buds! ha! that is handsome of her! The operation was well done, and she did not die of it. On the contrary, she seems in better health, and you also. Now you must be good, be quiet, keep in perspiration, get wholly well, and you shall see her again."

Charney bent upon him a look of gratitude, and offered him his hand. This time Ludovic did not draw back, but pressed the hand of the Count with emotion, tears starting in his eyes; but all at once, reproaching himself without doubt for this infraction of the invariable rule of conduct which he had marked out for himself, the muscles of his face lengthened, his voice took a harsher tone; then, holding all the time in his hands the hand of the prisoner, but trying to deceive him as to the motive of his first movement, he said, "You see how you

are uncovering yourself again;" and as if with only a professional interest, he covered the arm of the Count with the blankets; then, after new instructions given in an official tone, he left the chamber, humming a familiar air.

CHAPTER VIII.

That day and the following an extreme state of exhaustion, the natural result of the great crisis and violent perspiration, rendered Charney incapable of moving or thinking; but after the third day a sensible amelioration was perceptible, and if, vanquished still by weakness and illness, he was obliged to keep his bed, at least he could look forward to a time not far distant when he would be able to rise, walk, take again his ordinary promenade, and see once more his companion and his benefactress.

For to her all his thoughts were directed. He could not explain to himself by what singular circumstances this feeble vegetation, thrown under his feet in the court of the prison, had cured him of his *ennui*, — he whom the splendor of the world and of fortune had failed to divert, — and snatched him from death, to which human science had condemned him.

In his inability to apply the full force of his reasoning powers to solve this mysterious point, it was with a sentiment of superstition that he attached himself more and more to his Picciola. He could not ground his gratitude to this inert and insensible being upon any basis of reflection or intention; yet

he could not but give her his affection in exchange for the boon she had bestowed upon him. Imagination works where reason cannot; his became excited, and his love for Picciola grew into a sort of worship.

He persuaded himself that a supernatural tie linked them one to the other; that there exist in matter secret attractions and incomprehensible sympathies which ally the man to the plant. He who refuses to acknowledge God is in danger of falling, perhaps, into the belief of the puerilities of fetichism and astrology. Picciola is his star, his madonna, his talisman!

Why is it that one sees men, illustrious by their learning or their genius, deny Providence, and yet at the same time show themselves to be the slaves of superstition? It is that, blinded by human pride, they would ascribe to themselves all their glory and their strength; but the instinctive religious sentiment, stifled in their heart, diverted from its natural channel, nevertheless finds the light, but suffering the imprint of their mistaken ideas. The homage, which they arrest in its flight to heaven, falls back to earth to find its object. They pretend to judge and not believe; and their genius, narrow in its greatness, contracting their horizon, permits them to see only a few of the combinations of the grand whole. They neglect the whole for the detail, because they believe themselves able in isolating the detail, to measure it and submit it to the analysis of

their feeble reason, not perceiving the point of junction where it is bound to the rest of the created world; for creation, the earth, the heavens, the stars, the whole universe, are they not one being, immense, complete, varied to infinity, which lives and palpitates under the puissant hand of God?

Thus Charney, his imagination perhaps still excited by the fever, sees in nature only Picciola, and to find analogies he arouses his memory, and asks of it the history of miraculous plants, from the *moly* of Homer, the palm of Latona, the ash of Odin, to the golden herb which shines before the eyes of the peasant of Brittany, or the flower of the thorn which preserves the shepherdess of La Brie from evil thoughts. He recalls the fig-tree of the Romans, the Teutatès of the Celts, worshipped under the figure of an oak; the vervain of the Gauls, the lotos of the Greeks, the beans of the Pythagorians, the mallow of the Persian fire-worshippers, the mandragora of the Hebrew priests, the marvellous effects of the seal of Solomon, and the hazel wand. He remembers the azure campac of the Persians, which grew for them only in Paradise; the sipakora, the fruit of which gives to the eater two hundred years of life; the touba-tree, overshadowing with its gigantic branches the celestial abode of Mahomet; the kaki, that other divine plant, each flower of which is gifted with a soul. He recalls the magic camalata, the verdant amrita, on which the Indians see hung fruits of ambrosia; the red tree of Kounboum, on each leaf

of which appears in relief one of the numerous characters of the alphabet of Thibet — vegetable poem which changes and extends itself from season to season — eternal song in honor of Buddha, the Indian Christ.* He attaches a symbolic sense to that usage of the Japanese, who give to their divinities for a pedestal a heliotrope or water-lily, and assign the birthplace of love to the bosom of a corolla. He approves that propensity of the Chinese to imitate in their clothing, their head-dresses, their habitations, the form of their liserons and their campanulas. He admires the religious scruples of the Siamese, who go so far as to forbid the destruction of certain plants, and even protect them against mutilation. He hears Charlemagne, legislator and philosopher, from the height of his western throne, recommend to his people the culture of flowers; he even comes to comprehend the tenderness which, according to Élien and Herodotus, Xerxès felt for a plane-tree, caressing it, pressing it in his arms, sleeping with delight under its shadow, decorating it with bracelets and collars of gold, and lamenting bitterly when it was necessary to leave it.

* According to the learned missionaries, Huc and Gabet, who, in the years 1844, '45, and '46, visited Tartary, Thibet, and China the tree of Kounboum, or of *the ten thousand images*, is not a symbol but a reality. It exists still in the same state, and they affirm, — they, Catholic priests, consequently interested to do justice to all pious Buddhist deceit, — that, "after having examined it with the most careful attention, it was impossible for them to discover the least fraud."

That which heretofore excited his raillery and contempt, and abased weak humanity before him, now exalts it in his eyes; for he knows what grave teachings can come from a stem or a branch; and in the customs of idolatry, he sees now only the gratitude which gave them birth. Has not a feeble reed provided man with his first arrow, his first pen, his first instrument of music, — his three great means of conquest?

In this state of mind, already convalescent, Charney was sitting one morning in his chamber, which he had not yet left since his illness, absorbed in thought, when suddenly the door opened, and Ludovic, with a radiant face, entered.

"It is in flower!" said he.

"What! Picciola?"

"Yes, Picciola, Piccioletta, my godchild."

"In flower!" exclaimed Charney, his eye sparkling and his face suffused; "in flower!" and springing towards the staircase, "I *must* see her," said he.

In vain the honest jailer assured him that it would be imprudent for him to go out so soon, that he must be patient for a day or two, that it was not late enough in the day, that the air was cool, that a relapse was sure to be fatal; all was useless. All that he could gain was Charney's consent to wait until the sun was high enough to be present at the *fête*.

That hour, how slowly it creeps! and yet he occupies it as well as he can. For the first time since his imprisonment he thinks of his toilet; yes, of

his toilet, of his adornment in honor of Picciola — of Picciola in blossom! His garments were tumbled, his hair in disorder, his beard long; he put all that to rights. A mirror, until that moment forgotten, is drawn from his dressing-case; he shaves himself carefully, — and all to see her in blossom.

This is the convalescent's first breathing of the air, the visit of the invalid to his physician, of the debtor to his benefactress, the lover to his mistress.

When his toilet was completed, as he stood with his eyes fixed upon the glass, he was astonished to find, notwithstanding his illness, his eye less dull, his expression less dejected, his brow less furrowed than heretofore. He is reminded that he is still young, and recognizes the truth that if there are bitter and poisonous thoughts which mar even the envelope that contains them, there are others gifted with a power to reanimate it.

At the appointed moment Ludovic presented himself, and supported the Count to aid him in descending the steep steps of the winding stone staircase. When the invalid entered the little court, the influence of the pure air and the light of heaven, or the sensitive condition of the nervous system belonging to convalescents, produced on him the impression that the whole air was pervaded with the perfume of his flower, and to her he attributed all his sweet and fresh sensations of returning life.

Of what use is the sweet perfume of flowers? Do they themselves enjoy it? No. Is it for the plea

ure of the animals? Who has ever seen a sheep or a dog stop before a rose to breathe its sweetness? It is for man alone then that they pour forth their fragrant treasures. Why? To make him love them, perhaps.

Charney was not so far wrong, after all, in believing in a mysterious force which draws man to the plant.

Now Picciola presented herself to him in all the prestige of her beauty. She displayed to him her brilliant and delicately shaded corolla; white, purple, and rose were blended in her large petals, bordered with a silvery fringe, through which the rays of the sun glancing gave the effect of a luminous halo around the flower. Charney gazed upon it with delight; he feared lest his breath should tarnish it, or the touch of his hand blight it. He thought no longer of analyzing it, or studying it; he admired and enjoyed its beauty and its odor. But soon another thought came to his mind, and the flower no longer fixes his eye. He sees the traces of mutilation along the stem, — branches broken, leaves mangled by the touch of the scissors. The wounds are not yet healed. Then he feels that to her he owes his life. A sentiment more vivid and sweeter than admiration fills his heart, and the benefactions of Picciola make him forget her beauty and her perfume.

CHAPTER IX.

During the following days the convalescent had the right, by the direction of the physicians, to take his promenade in the court at the hour that best suited him, and also to prolong it according to his desire. This gave him the opportunity to resume with ardor his interrupted studies.

Desiring to record in writing his observations upon the plant, from the first day to the present moment, he attempted to entice Ludovic to procure for him pen, ink and paper. He was prepared to see him at first frown, put on his air of importance, require much pressing, and in the end yield, either from the interest which he felt in his invalid and his goddaughter, or from the desire of gain; for this time it was a question of something to be furnished to a prisoner.

But it was not so. Ludovic at once received his proposition very good-naturedly.

"Certainly, Signor Count, nothing is easier," said he, turning aside to give a few whiffs to his pipe, so prevent it from becoming extinguished; for he always ceased to smoke when with Charney, to whom the odor of tobacco was disagreeable. "I am far

from making any objection. But all those little things are under the key of the governor, and not under mine. If you wish for them, you have only to address him a petition to that effect, and you may get them."

Charney smiled, and was not discouraged.

"But to write that petition, the very things that ask for are necessary, — ink, pen and paper."

"That is true, Signor Count, that is true," replied the jailer. "This is the way this matter of a petition is generally managed," added he, with a knowing air, his head thrown back, his arms crossed behind his back, — "I go to the governor and tell him that you have a request to make, without explaining what, — that is not my business, but yours and his. If he cannot come himself to talk with you, he will send one of his men. That man will hand you a pen and a paper, stamped and signed, one sheet only; you write on it, he standing by; he places his seal upon it before you; you return him the pen, he carries away the letter, and all is done."

"But, Ludovic, it is not to the governor that I wish to be under obligation, but to you."

"To me! then you do not know my orders," said the jailer, resuming his harsh and severe manner.

He drew a long inspiration from his pipe, exhaled the smoke slowly, as if to keep the Count at a distance, turned to the "right about," and went out. The next day when Charney returned to the subject, he would do nothing but wink his eye and wag his head.

Too proud to humble himself to ask a favor of the governor, but too desirous of accomplishing his object to abandon it at once, from a toothpick the prisoner made a pen; his razor, as well as it could, transformed itself into a penknife; soot, dissolved in water, and a golden cup from his dressing-case, served him as ink and inkstand; and fine white cambric handkerchiefs, remnants of his past luxury took the place of paper.

It was thus that Charney, when separated from Picciola, could still occupy himself in writing the result of his observations.

How interesting and astonishing they were! What a pleasure it would have been to him to impart them to an attentive ear!

His neighbor, the catcher of flies, seemed to him worthy to receive his confidences; this face, which had seemed to him at first so sullen and frowning, he had seen since expand with good-nature and brighten with intelligence. When, from his little window, the old man watched him and his Picciola, with a half curious, half dreamy gaze, Charney felt himself attracted towards him. A wave of the hand, a smile, had even been exchanged between them but the *régime* of the prison interdicted them from addressing a word to each other, even to inquire after their health. The explorer of the marvels of nature was therefore obliged to keep to himself all his precious discoveries.

Among the multitude of these must be mentioned the singular ability that he discovered in his flower

to turn towards the sun, and face it through all its daily course, so as to appropriate more fully its life-giving rays; and when the sun hid itself behind clouds, and the rain threatened, her petals instantly closed to shelter her, like a vessel furling its sails before the storm.

"Is heat then so necessary to her?" thought Charney, "and why? And why does she fear a slight shower which would refresh her? Oh, I have confidence in her now; she will explain all to me."

Picciola had already been to him a beneficent physician; she could in need act as compass and barometer; she was going to serve him as timepiece. For by dint of constantly inhaling her fragrance, he thought he could perceive that it varied at different periods of the day. At first this phenomenon seemed to him an illusion of the senses; but his reiterated experiments assured him of its reality, and he soon became able to designate with certainty the hour of the day by the odor of the plant.*

The flowers had multiplied, and towards evening Picciola breathed forth her sweetest perfumes. What a delight it was then to the happy captive to draw near to her. By means of several planks, which he owed to the munificence of Ludovic, he had constructed a little bench, supported on four solid sticks pointed at their extremity, and driven into the inter-

* The English botanist, Sir James Smith, notices this same peculiarity in the *Antirrhinum repens*. — *Flora Britannica*, Vol. II p. 658.

stices of the pavement. A rough plank made a back against which he could lean, when he wished to think and forget himself in living in the atmosphere of his plant. There he felt more at ease than he had ever done in former times on his silken couches; there he would pass hours in meditation, recalling the days of his youth, which had fled without happiness and without affection, lost in vain chimeras, in a premature disenchantment.

It happened often, during these thoughts of the past, that he fell into profound reveries, half waking, half sleeping, — a condition of apathetic torpor of the body, during which his over-excited imagination peopled the court of his prison with delightful images.

Then he fancied himself again at those *fêtes*, where at one time *ennui* had pursued him, where he lavished upon others the pleasures which he alone had no power to enjoy.

He saw, in imagination, on a winter night, the illuminated façade of his old *hôtel* in the Rue de Verneuil. The noise of a thousand carriages sounded in his ear; by the light of torches they entered his circular court, each depositing in its turn at the steps of the peristyle, covered with carpets and decorated with hangings, the fashionable belles of the day wrapped in thick furs, under which rustled robes of silk; the beaux of the court, with pointed hats, high cravats, and bunches of ribbons at the knee; distinguished artists, with bare throats, and short hair, and

costume half Greek, half French; generals, with plumes and tricolored sashes; men of science and men of letters, with or without the distinctive collar of green. A crowd of lackeys were on all sides, defying, under their new liveries, the old-fashioned decrees of the Convention.

In his *salons* he saw again, in inextricable confusion, all that was illustrious, or odd and eccentric, at that epoch. The Roman toga and the Greek chlamys, brushed against the dress-coat and the military uniform; pumps with rosettes, boots, gold-laced, or with spurs, trod the same floor as the buskin of the soldier and that of the actor. Men of the law, the pen, the sword, moneyed men, ministers, contractors, artists and governors, whirled in this eddy, side by side with the members of the Directory. An actor is seen by the side of a bishop; a *ci-devant* noble near a *ci-devant* pauper; the aristocracy and the democracy joining hands; wealth and science walking arm-in-arm. Such was society forming anew, rallying all its elements around a common centre, each one feeling itself too weak to form a circle of its own. Thus it is with school-children, drawn together by similarity of age and the need of pleasure, as they grow older they separate themselves little by little from their playfellows, constrained, without knowing it, by the powerful system of social order.

Charney smiled as he contemplated this phantasmagoria of manners, rank, and costumes. That which had been before for him a fruitful and bitter

source of contemptuous thoughts of humanity, now only aroused in him mockery of his own follies and wasted efforts.

Suddenly brilliant orchestras broke into loud, animating and varied measures, and the ball opened The remembered airs produced a more lively impression upon his senses than when he really heard them. The light scintillating from innumerable lustres, their prismatic reflection in the mirrors, the soft and perfumed air of the ball-room or the banquet-hall, the odor of the viands, the noisy gayety of the guests, the whirl of the waltzers who rustled against him in passing, the light and frivolous words that crossed and mingled in confusion around him, the echo of mirthful laughter, — all produced a sensation of joyousness which was new to him.

Then graceful and elegant women, with ivory shoulders and swan-like necks, arrayed in sumptuous robes, gauzes embroidered with gold, sparkling with gems, passed before him, smiling as they greeted him. He recognized them, for they were the constant guests and the ornaments of his splendid *soirées*, when, rich and free, he was cited as one of the fortunate ones of the earth.

There shone without rivals the proud Tallien, arrayed in the classic robes of Greece, and wearing jewels and rings of untold value even upon the toes of her beautiful naked feet, scarcely imprisoned in light golden sandals ; the charming Récamier, whom Athens would have made a divinity ; and last, the

gentle and lovely Josephine, formerly Countess de Beauharnais, who by the charm of her gracefulness often passed for the most beautiful of the three.

Even beside these, many others shone with dazzling freshness, grace, and coquetry.

How fascinating they were to-day to Charney, in their youth and beauty. How much more attractive and lovely than heretofore. How happy he felt himself to be able to make a choice among such charming women!

He endeavored to do so; and after glancing hesitatingly at one and another, all at once, in the midst of them, he distinguished one, not with uncovered shoulders, or ornaments of diamonds.

Simple in attire and in her bearing, she stood with drooping head, and seemed to shrink from notice She was a young girl, in a simple dress of white, with nothing to heighten her beauty but her native grace and the blushes that suffused her cheeks. Charney did not know her, and yet, as he contemplated her, the others seemed to fade and disappear; a gentle emotion took possession of him which he could not account for.

But how much was his emotion heightened when he saw in her dark hair one flower, her sole ornament. That flower — it is the blossom of his plant the flower of his prison!

He extended his arms towards the young girl suddenly everything became dim oefore his eyes; once more the music of the orchestra struck upon

his ear with redoubled force; then the young girl and the flower seemed to melt one into the other the open and fragrant petals encircled the lovely face, and soon hid it entirely.

Already the walls of the ball-room, despoiled of their hangings, became obscure, and in their place was naught but a cloud of vapor. The lustres, gradually extinguished, detached from the ceiling, described a curve of light, fading away at the lower extremity of the cloud. Heavy pavements replaced the smooth and polished floor. Cool reason returned in the place of delirium; memory kills the illusion, reality destroys the dream.

The prisoner opens his eyes; he is sitting on his bench, his feet on the pavement of the court; his flower is before him, and the sun is sinking below the horizon.

The first few times that he was attacked by this sort of vertigo, Charney was filled with wonder. It was always when he was seated on his bench, near his plant, that he fell into these soothing reveries. After a little reflection, he explained to himself the phenomenon. Science had taught him that the odor exhaled by some flowers causes sometimes a slight and voluptuous asphyxia. Now he understands how close are the relations between him and his plant, and the almost magic influence exercised by her upon him.

The brilliant *fêtes* at which he had in imagination been present, Picciola had given him.

But that young girl, so modest and pure, whose unexpected presence had stirred in him a new and delightful emotion, who is she? Has he ever seen her before? And, like the other beautiful women, is she not a reminiscence of his past? His memory can recall nothing like her. Is it then, on the contrary, a revelation of the future? But has he a future, and ought he to believe in revelations? No! the young girl of the white robe and modest blushes, the young girl at once so simple and so attractive, who eclipsed and outshone her brilliant rivals, is Picciola! — Picciola personified in a dream.

Well, she shall be his love! He has no difficulty in recalling the graceful form and ingenuous features that the vision had borne. From henceforth it is with this sweet image that he will lull his reveries, that he will fill the void in his heart and his brain; at least, before that lovely maiden, smiling phantom evoked to break his solitude, the doors of his prison will be forced to open; she can visit him, come and sit beside him, walk with him, follow him, smile upon him, love him! She will live in his life, in his breath, in his love; he will speak to her in his thought, and closing his eyes see her; *they* will be one, *he* will be two!

Thus to the cherished studies of the captive of Fenestrella succeeded the not less absorbing charm of illusion, and he plunged deeper and deeper into that sphere of poetry from which one can only emerge, like the bee from the bosom of flowers, laden

with perfume and with a harvest of honey. Side by side with his real life, he lived his life of imagination, the complement of the other, and without which man enjoys but half the gifts of the Creator.

Now his time is divided between Picciola the plant and Picciola the maiden. After reason and labor he has pleasure and love.

CHAPTER X.

Pursuing his investigating experiments on the process of inflorescence, Charney was each day more and more enraptured by the orderly prodigies of Nature. But his eyes were unable to penetrate into many mysteries so minute as to be indiscernible to the naked eye. He was fretting under this inability, when Ludovic presented him from his neighbor, the Italian conspirator, a powerful magnifying-glass, by the aid of which he had been enabled to count eight thousand ocular facets on the cornea of a fly. Charney was overwhelmed with joy.

Thanks to this instrument, parts of the plant before imperceptible sprang forth to his sight, a hundred times their ordinary size. Then he made, or hoped to make, great strides in the path of discovery.

He analyzed in detail the external envelope of his flower; he learned that the brilliant color of the petals, their crimson spots, the stripes of velvet or of watered satin which adorn their base, or fringe their outline, are not there only to delight the eye by their beauty, but also to divide or reflect the rays of the sun, to diminish or augment their force, according to the necessities of the flower during the grand process of fructification.

These shining and varnished surfaces are doubtless glandulous collections of absorbent vessels, charged with the duty of breathing the air, the light, and humid vapors, for the nourishment of the seeds; for without light, no color; without air and heat, no life. Moisture, heat, light, — behold, then, of what vegetation, the marvel of the earth, is composed, and behold also what it restores to the earth at its death

Without his knowledge, often during these hours of study and reverie, Charney had two attentive spectators, who watched all his movements, and by sympathy shared all his emotions, — Girhardi and his daughter. The latter, educated by a deeply religious father, living a contemplative and secluded life, presented one of those natures in which all lofty and holy principles are united. With her beauty, her virtues, the graces of her mind and person, she could not fail to have had admirers; gifted with a sensibility deep and expansive, she seemed formed to be peculiarly susceptible to the sentiment of love; but if some passing fancies had, when she was in the gay society of Turin, for an instant ruffled the serenity of her spirit, they had all been absorbed in one great grief — the captivity of her father.

Was it possible for her to love with the freedom of a happy heart, she who in her double worship, religious and filial, saw her Saviour on the cross, and her father in prison? Not that the fair daughter of Turin abandoned herself easily to sadness and melancholy. All her duties were a pleasure, all her sacri

fices a delight. But is it among the happy ones of the world that she finds her pleasure? Where she can dry a tear and awaken a smile, there is her place, there her pride, there her triumph! One alone at Fenestrella has been the recipient of her soothing care.

But since she has seen Charney, she has felt for him both interest and compassion. He is a captive like her father, and is near her father. He has nothing in the world to love but a plant; and how much he loves it!

Perhaps the noble countenance and fine person of the Count enhanced the pity of the young girl; but if she had known him in the time of his prosperity, when he was surrounded by the false shows of happiness, she would not have distinguished him from others. That which charmed her in him was his isolation, his misfortune, his resignation. She has instinctively bestowed upon him her friendship and even her esteem, for in her ignorance she has placed misfortune among the virtues.

This admirable girl, as bold when a good deed was to be done as she was timid before a bold glance, ignorant of the danger, constantly encouraged and stimulated her father in his advances towards Charney.

At last, one day Girhardi, showing himself at the window, not content with the usual salutation of the hand to the Count, motioned him to approach as near as possible, and moderating the tone of his

voice, as if in apprehension of being overheard, he entered into the following dialogue with him.

"I have perhaps good news to tell you, sir."

"And I, sir, have thanks to render for the microscope you have been so kind as to lend me."

"I cannot even claim the merit of the idea; it was my daughter's thought."

"You have a daughter, and they accord you the favor of seeing her?"

"Yes, I am a father, and I bless God every day. My poor child took a great interest in you, my dear sir, when you were ill, and since, in watching you lavish so much care upon your plant. Have you never noticed her at the grating?"

"In fact — I believe" —

"But in speaking to you of my daughter, I forget to tell you the great news. The Emperor is about to return to Milan, where he is to be crowned King of Italy."

"King of Italy! Ah! then, sir, he will be still more your master and mine. As to the microscope," pursued Charney, who had not been much diverted from his first thought by the great news, not suspecting a sequel to it, "you have deprived yourself of it for a long time; pardon me, you will permit me to retain it a little longer to complete some experiments; however, I will return it to you, if"—

"I do not need it; I have others," said the Italian, with a benevolent smile, divining from the tone of Charney's voice how much it would cost him to par-

with the instrument; — "keep it, sir, keep it as a *souvenir* of a companion in captivity, who feels for you, I beg you to believe, a lively interest."

Charney would have expressed his gratitude to the generous man, but he interrupted him.

"But let me finish that which I have to tell you;" and, lowering his voice, "It is said that pardons will be given in honor of the Emperor's new crown. Have you friends at Milan or Turin? Is there any way of inciting them to action?"

The Count sadly gave a negative sign, and said, "I have no friends."

"No friends," repeated the old man, with a glance full of commiseration; "do you then distrust your fellow-men? Friendship is not wanting to those who have faith in it. But I have friends, friends whom even adversity has not shaken; they might perhaps do for you what they cannot yet do for me."

"I will ask nothing from General Bonaparte," replied the Count, in a hard, proud tone, in which surged up all his old bitterness.

"Hush! speak lower! I think I hear footsteps — but no" —

There was a moment's pause; then the Italian continued, with an inflection of voice, by which the rebuke was softened as if in passing the lips of a father, —

"Dear companion, you are still exasperated. I had believed that the studies to which you have devoted yourself for several months had appeased in you that

hatred which God reprobates, and which perverts a man's whole being. Have not the kindly virtues of your flower healed the wounds of an unkind world? This Bonaparte that you seem to hate I have perhaps more reason to complain of than you, for my son died for having served him."

"And you attempted to avenge your son!" interrupted Charney, with warmth.

"I see that these false rumors have reached even you," said the old man, raising his noble head to heaven, as if to call God to witness. "I revenge myself by a crime! No; but in the first moments of my grief, it is true, I could not control myself and while the people of Turin saluted the conqueror with acclamations of joy, I mingled with their '*vivats*' my cries of despair. I was arrested; I had a knife about me. Base wretches, in order to curry favor with their master, found no difficulty in persuading him that I had some design against his life. They called me an assassin, and I was only an agonized father who had just learned the death of his son. Well! I can understand that Bonaparte was deceived, and that he is not a bad man; he has not put you or me to death. If he restores my liberty, that will be to repair only one error in my case; however, I should bless him,—not that I cannot endure my captivity. Full of faith in Providence, I am resigned to all. But my prison weighs upon my daughter; it is for her that I wish to be free, to put an end to her exile from the world, that she may

participate in the pleasures that belong to youth. Is there no being who interests you, no loving woman who weeps for you, and for whom you would be happy to sacrifice the pride with which your oppression inspires you? Come, authorize my friends to speak in your behalf."

Charney smiled. "No woman weeps for me," said he. "Why should I wish for the world where I was less happy than I am here? But were I to find there friends, fortune, and happiness, I yet would say no! a thousand times no! if to gain it I must humble myself before the power which I have plotted to overthrow."

"Then you cut yourself off from all hope."

"Never will I salute with the title of Emperor him who was my equal."

"Take care that you do not foolishly sacrifice your future to a sentiment prompted perhaps more by vanity than patriotism; — but hark," again said Girhardi, "for this time I am not mistaken; some one is coming; — adieu."

And he drew back from the grated window.

"Thanks, thanks for the microscope," cried Charney, before he had entirely disappeared from sight.

At that moment the door of the little court creaked on its hinges, and Ludovic entered, bearing the daily allowance of the prisoner. Seeing him pensive and *distrait*, and not wishing to disturb him, he contented himself with rattling the dishes which he carried, to let him know that his dinner was ready. After

arranging all in the chamber of the prisoner, he retired, saluting as he passed *Monsieur* and *Madame*, — the man and the plant, as he said sometimes.

"The microscope is mine," thought Charney, "but how have I merited the kindness of this stranger?" and seeing Ludovic crossing the court, — "even this man has gained my esteem; under the rough exterior beats a noble heart, I am sure. There are then men good and tender-hearted; but where do they come to take refuge?"

He seemed to hear a voice reply, — "It is because misfortune has taught you to appreciate a kindness, that men seem to you less worthy of your contempt. What have these two men done? One has watered your plant for you without your knowledge, the other has furnished you with the means of analyzing it and knowing it better."

"Oh!" said Charney to himself, "the heart is not mistaken; there is on their part true generosity."

"Yes," replied the voice, "but it is because that generosity is exercised towards you, that you render them justice. If Picciola had not been born, of these two men one would have been now in your eyes an imbecile old man, devoted to degrading occupations; the other a coarse being, actuated by mean and sordid avarice. In your world of other days, did you love any one or anything, Sir Count? No; your heart, as your thought, was given up to isolation. Here, it is because you love Picciola, that

these two men have loved you; it is through her that they have come to you."

And Charney regarded by turns his plant and his precious microscope. Napoleon, Emperor of the French, King of Italy! That terrible formula, one half of which had formerly sufficed to make him a furious conspirator, scarcely now made any impression upon his mind.

What to him are the triumphs of the new ruler of the nation and of the liberties of Europe? An insect buzzing menacingly about his flowers caused him more distress and care than all the invasions of the new empire!

CHAPTER XI.

He resumed his labors; armed with his glass, now his own, he reiterated his observations, and extended the field of his discoveries, until enthusiasm fairly took possession of him. It must be said, however, that, inexperienced as he was in analysis, ignorant of first principles, and without sufficiently powerful instruments, sometimes insensibly the spirit of system and of paradox mingled with his spirit of inquiry.

Thus he invented a thousand theories upon the circulation of the sap, upon the manner in which it rises, diffuses itself, is transformed, without suspecting its double current; likewise, upon the variety in the coloring of the plant, the different aroma of the stem, the leaves, and the flowers, upon the gum and the resins distilled by plants, also upon the wax and honey drawn from them by the bees. At first he found answers to all his questionings; but the theories of to-day overthrew those of yesterday, and he was delighted with his impotence, since it forced him to exercise all the faculties of his mind and imagination, and prevented him from looking forward to the end of this attractive occupation.

One day he triumphed in recording the most important of his observations.

He had heard heretofore, but only with a mocking spirit, of the loves of flowers, that ingenious and sublime discovery of Linnæus. Aided by his microscope, he gave himself up entirely to this new series of studies; he watched patiently, and penetrated at last these mysteries.

He perceived a movement of life and love in all parts of the flower, which seemed for an instant to feel the animation of thinking, loving human beings! Astonished, confounded, Charney thought himself still dreaming. By analogy, rising from the plant to the animal, he embraced the entire scale of creation in its harmony, in its immensity! He felt as if the whole secret of the universe was in his possession! His eyes grew dim; the instrument fell from his hand; the astonished philosopher fell back upon his rustic seat, crossed his arms, then, after long meditation, addressing himself to his plant, "Picciola," said he, "I had in other days the whole world in which to roam. I had numerous friends, — I was surrounded by learned men of all sorts,— and never one of these *savants* has taught me as much as thou; not one of my friends, or rather of the men who usurped that title, has rendered me the good offices that I have received from thee. In this circumscribed spot, where thou livest between two stones, pacing back and forth near thee, without losing sight of thee, I have thought more, felt more, observed more, than

in all my extended travels through Europe. How blind was I! When thou, so pale, so feeble, so languishing, didst present thyself to me, I expected nothing from thy coming, — and it was a companion who came to me, — a book which was opening to me, — a world which revealed itself to my eyes This *companion* has soothed my weariness, and made it disappear; she has lent a new charm to that existence which she was destined to preserve; she has taught me to know men, and reconciled me to them. This *book* teaches me to despise none; it convicts me of my ignorance, and abuses my pride; it forces me to believe that knowledge, like virtue, is only to be acquired by humility; that it is necessary to descend in order to rise; that the first step of that immense ladder, whose top we think to reach, is buried in the ground, and it is there that we must commence. It is the book of light! Written in living characters, in a language yet mysterious for me, it offers me sublime enigmas to solve, of which each word is a consolation. This *world* is that of truth, one and absolute; it is intelligent creation; it is the summary and criterion of the eternal and celestial world, the revelation of that infinite law of love which governs the universe, which by gravitation holds atoms and suns, which links in one band the plant and the stars, the insect which crawls on the ground and the man who raises his brow to heaven to find — his Creator whoever he may be."

Charney, violently agitated, paced rapidly the

court; thought succeeded to thought in his brain conviction struggled in his conscience; then he returned to Picciola, gazed upon her with emotion, raised his eyes for a moment to heaven, and murmured these words, —

"Powerful God! source invisible whence flows all harmony, all life, too much false science has obscured my reason, too many sophisms have hardened my heart, so that Thou canst not easily penetrate it. I cannot yet hear thee, but I call thee; I cannot see thee, but I seek thee."

Entering his chamber, he read on the wall, —

"God is naught but a word!"

He added, — "That word, may it not solve the grand enigma of the universe?"

There was here still an expression of doubt; but was not to doubt, for that haughty spirit, to denounce his former negation and to turn back in the false path which he had been pursuing? Now, it is no longer to himself alone that he looks for theories to support his already tottering philosophy; he has no longer faith only in his own strength and reason, and yielding himself to those new emotions in which he finds so sweet a charm; it is to Picciola that he turns for a belief — a God — a support. And anew he interrogates her with fervor, that the remainder of obscurity which environs him may be dissipated.

CHAPTER XII.

Thus passed his days. After many hours wholly devoted to study and analysis, he sought agreeable relaxation and pastime in turning from Picciola the plant to Picciola the maiden.

When the perfume of his flowers was wafted to him in abundance, when his head was heavy, and his eyes closed to shut out the dazzling sunlight, he would say to himself, "Picciola will give a *fête* to-day."

Then, yielding himself to his reveries, he immediately fell into that state, half sleeping, half waking, peopled with visions that a ray of reason was still able to direct.

Oh! is not this one of the most intoxicating enjoyments that man can know, — the power to direct his dreams, and live at will in that other life, where the events succeed each other with such rapidity, where ages cost but one hour of existence, where a magic reflection seems to color all the actors in the drama which is passing, where the emotions only are real There, all stern reality disappears, leaving only the pure essence of things.

Do you wish for music? Harmonious concerts are wafted to your ear without the grating sound of

the preparatory tuning of instruments, the distorted faces of the musicians, or the ungraceful forms of their instruments; this is the life of the soul without the body, — pleasure without regrets, the rainbow without the storm.

Charney abandoned himself to his illusions. Faithful to the sweet image of Picciola, it was her that he called; she it was that presented herself to him always in the same form, with the same grace, — young, modest, charming, — appearing to him sometimes in the midst of his former companions of science or pleasure, sometimes near the sole beings that he had loved, his mother and sister, long since dead. She renewed for him scenes full of tenderness, ineffable memories of youth and home, — her presence adding to them new sweetness.

Sometimes she introduced him suddenly into a modest mansion, which was pervaded with an air of comfort and good taste. The guests he met here were unknown to him, but they welcomed him with smiles, and he at once felt himself at home as at the paternal fireside.

After having recalled to life his extinct family, his joys of the past, she evoked yet another family which might exist for Charney, and bring to him joys in the future. He could not explain it to himself, but at his waking he was inspired with a new confidence in his destiny, and he regularly kept a record on his journal of fine cambric of the events of his dreams, — the only happy events of his life save his captivity.

It happened however that, once, Picciola, in one of these *fêtes* where he was accustomed to find near her happiness and calm, caused him a sudden fright. Afterwards he could never recall it without believing in revelations, and the truth of presentiments.

This is what happened. The perfume of the plant indicated the sixth hour of the evening. They had never been more powerful; thirty opened flowers combined to produce that magnetic atmosphere under the influence of which Charney slumbered.

In his dream, separating himself from the crowd, he was breathing the air on a green esplanade, where his darling phantom alone had followed his steps. Picciola advanced smiling towards him, and he in a contemplative attitude was admiring the supple grace of the young girl, the light undulations of the drapery of her white robe which indicated the harmony of her movements, and the waves of her dark hair, adorned as usual by his beloved flower. Suddenly he saw her pause — she totters — she extends to him her arms — the seal of death is on her brow! He would spring towards her — an obstacle against which he struggles in vain holds him chained — he utters a cry and awakes. Awake, he hears another cry respond to his own — yes, a cry — the voice of a woman.

Nevertheless Charney finds himself in the court, on his bench, near his plant; but now it is to his wide-opened and bodily eyes that a second apparition of a young girl appears at the little grated

window: at first this pensive and lovely face, half in shadow, seems to undulate in a vague indistinctness; but gradually it becomes clear to him, and he sees her penetrating gaze fixed upon him; he rises, approaches, and all at once the sweet vision disappears, or rather the young girl flies.

Rapid as was her flight, Charney had caught a glimpse of her features, her hair, her form, her white robe. He stood motionless; he thought that his awaking was not complete, and that the insurmountable obstacle which in his dream separated him from Picciola was the prison-grating.

Ludovic at that moment hastened towards him with an air of great alarm, and finding him still agitated, said, —

"Signor Count, has your illness attacked you again? *Parbleu!* we must send for the doctors again, for it is the order; but be easy; Madame Picciola and I, in spite of them, will undertake your cure."

"I am not ill," replied Charney, scarcely recovered from his emotion. "Who has made you think" —

"The fly-catcher's daughter — she saw you, heard you cry, and hastened to call me."

Charney became thoughtful. It then came to his mind for the first time that a young girl was sometimes in that part of the fortress.

"The resemblance which I fancied between the stranger and Picciola is only an illusion of my senses,

a common and simple optical effect," said he to himself. "Often thus by a phenomenon of vision the eye retains for some time the image of the object upon which it has been resting. It is a strange thing, though, to see this sweet vision pass from the illusory to the real life — from the dream to the awakening. The image of Picciola, however, was not perfectly reproduced in the young girl of the prison, — *she* wore no flower in her hair."

While comparing them, he recalled what Girhardi had told him of the interest his daughter had felt in him. She had pitied him during his illness; it was to her that he owed the possession of his precious microscope; she was interested in his labors and his studies; even now, in hastening to send Ludovic to him, she had given another evidence of her good will.

And Charney, his heart filled with gratitude, felt impelled to manifest it. But how?

Not without hesitation, not without reproaching himself, as if in this moment he rendered himself guilty by a profanation, he broke, and gathered silently, and with a trembling hand, a flower from his plant.

"Formerly," said Charney to himself, "how prodigally have I wasted gold, to adorn with pearls and diamonds brows vowed to shame and falsehood. To how many deceitful women and lying friends have I thrown my fortune, caring for nothing but the impulses of my own heart, which I gave to be tram

pled under their feet as under my own. Ah! if the worth of an object depends upon the value that the owner attaches to it, I swear that never was offered by me a gift more precious than this which I take from thee to-day, Picciola!" And placing the little branch in the hands of the jailer, — "My good Ludovic, present this from me to the daughter of my venerable fellow-captive. Say to her that I thank her for her interest in me, and that the Count de Charney, poor and a prisoner, possesses nothing of more worth to offer her."

Ludovic received the flower with an air of stupefaction. He had come to enter so fully into the love which the prisoner felt for his plant, that he could not conceive that so slight a service could gain for the daughter of the fly-catcher a mark of such munificence.

"Well, after all, by the head of Saint Pascal!" said he, as he went out, "they have only seen my godchild from a distance; they will have a chance to judge now whether she is lovely and whether her odor is sweet."

CHAPTER XIII.

As for Charney, the time was near at hand when he would have to make many other sacrifices of that kind, for the epoch of fructification had arrived for Picciola. Some of her flowers had already lost their brilliant petals; the stamens having become useless had fallen, as heretofore the cotyledons, when the first leaves, having arrived at the age of strength, were able to do without their care. The ovary containing the germ of the seeds commenced to swell under the enlarged calyx. The maternal flowers despoiled themselves of their brilliancy, as women grow indifferent to showy adornment when the sacred cares of maternity devolve upon them.

Charney prepared for new observations, the grandest and most sublime, without doubt, that he had yet made, for they attach to the duration of created races, to the reproduction of life.

Already, in analyzing a bud, which had been detached from the stem by the bite of an insect, he had had a glimpse of this primitive germ, this feeble embryo, which owes its development to the loves of the flowers. Admirable foresight! wonderful arrangement of Nature, which science has yet been

unable to explain! Now it is the birth of the completed being that is in question, of that seed, whose narrow envelope contains the entire plant; phenomenon for which the others have only been the preparation. The moment has come for the observer to watch the gestation of the vegetable egg through all its epochs, in the bud, in the brilliantly arranged flower, under the calyx discrowned of its petals. It would be necessary for him again to mutilate Picciola; but will she not easily repair her losses? On all sides, at the joints of the stems, under the axillas of the leaves, new shoots announce a future flowering; of these Charney will take tender care.

To-morrow then he will commence his work.

The next day he took his place on his seat with the gravity of a man who undertakes difficult experiments, whose success may be long delayed. At the first glance at his plant he was surprised at the state of languor manifest in all its parts. The flowers, drooping on their stems, seemed no longer to have power to turn toward the sun, and the leaves seemed to have lost their lustrous verdure.

Charney thought at first that a violent storm was gathering, and immediately prepared his mats to defend Picciola from the too rude attacks of wind or hail. But the sky is cloudless, the air serene, and the song of the lark is heard from afar in the blue space.

His brow contracts with anxiety. After a moment's reflection he exclaims, "It is water that she

needs!" He runs to bring some from his chamber and kneeling before his plant, raising the lower leaves to moisten its root, he is struck motionless with consternation. His gaze remains fixed on the ground; he lets the water-pitcher fall, and seems stupefied by what he sees. He discovers the source of the evil. Picciola is dying!

While she has multiplied her flowers and her perfumes for his study and pleasure, her stem also has expanded. Crowded at its base between two stones of the pavement, strangled under a double pressure, the stem had swollen just above the point where it emerges from the ground, but the friction against the rough edges of the granite had soon mangled it, and the nourishing sap of the plant was exuding from several fissures.

Picciola lacks earth; exhausted, without sap, she will die, if prompt succor is not given her. She is dying! Charney sees it. There is but one means of saving her, — that is, to lift the pavements which press upon her; but can he do it? Without tools his efforts will be vain.

He sprang towards the little door of entrance, and, knocking vehemently, called Ludovic. At last he appeared.

At the recital, and the sight of the disaster, he stood confounded; but notwithstanding his tenderness for his goddaughter, he responded to the prayers of Charney — who besought him with frantic supplications to lift the pavements — only by these words

which he accompanied with a long-drawn sigh and a shrug of the shoulders, —

"And what of my orders, Signor Count?"

This time the prisoner offered him not only one *bijou* from his precious dressing-case, but the entire case with all that it contained. Ludovic drew himself up, folded closely his arms upon his breast, and putting on the air and manner of the jailer, and his tone half *Provençal*, half Piedmontese, said, —

"*Per Bacco!* Were you to offer me a fortune; — I am an old soldier, and I know my duty; — address yourself to the commandant."

"No!" exclaimed Charney; "rather will I tear my hands in pieces in lifting and breaking the stones."

"We shall see; at all events, do as you please." And Ludovic, who in entering had held his thumb over his pipe, keeping it behind him while addressing the prisoner, replaced it bruskly between his lips, relighting it by a strong inspiration, and turned to go out. Charney detained him.

"My good Ludovic, you whom I have always found so compassionate, can you do nothing for me — nothing for *her*?"

"*Tonnerre!*" said he, trying by oaths to defend himself from the emotion which was taking possession of him; "let me alone, you and your cursed gillyflower! I ask pardon of the poor thing; it is no fault of hers that you are so diabolically obstinate. What! you have the heart, then, to let her die thus without help?"

"But what is to be done?"

"Address yourself to the commandant, I tel you."

"Never!"

"Well, if you won't do it yourself, let me speak to him."

"I forbid you to do it," cried Charney.

"How! you forbid me!" replied the jailer "What! am I to receive orders from you? If I choose to speak to him — No! I will not speak to him. After all, what business is it of mine. Let her die, let her live, what do I care? Good night."

"But your commandant, would he understand me?" said the Count, suddenly softening.

"Why not? Do you take him for a barbarian? Explain it nicely to him with pretty phrases — not too long; you are a *savant*, now is the time to use your learning. Why should not he understand your love for your plant: I understood it very well. Besides, make yourself easy; I shall be there. I will tell him what a good medicine it is for all sorts of ailments; he has not good health — he has the rheumatism now — that is lucky — he will understand better" —

Charney hesitated still. Ludovic, with a wink of his eye, pointed to the fainting Picciola. The Count gave a sign of assent, and Ludovic went out.

In a few moments a man, in costume half civil half military, brought to the prisoner an escritoire

and a sheet of paper bearing the stamp of the commandant. Then, as Ludovic had told him, the man stood by while Charney wrote his request; took it from him, sealed it, saluted him, and carried away the escritoire.

You smile perhaps with contempt in seeing the pride of the noble Count humbled so easily, and that haughty will yield at the sight of a fading flower. Have you then forgotten what Picciola is to the prisoner? Do you know what effect isolation and captivity will produce upon the proudest and most determined spirit? This act of weakness with which you reproach him, did he descend to it when he himself was broken down by suffering, deprived of air, of liberty, crushed between the stones of his prison, as his plant between two pavements? No! But between her and him are established mutual relations, sacred engagements: she has saved him from death; now in his turn he must save her!

The aged Girhardi saw Charney pacing the little court with agitated step and gestures of impatience and expectation. How slow the answer seemed to him in coming! Three hours had passed since his message to the governor, and the plant became every moment more exhausted by the loss of its sap. Charney would have seen his own blood flow more calmly.

The old man attempted to console him and give him hope. More experienced in the knowledge of plants and their maladies, he showed him how he

might close the wounds of Picciola, and preserve her from at least one of the dangers with which she was menaced.

According to his advice, Charney, with a mixture of moss, finely chopped straw and moistened earth, composed a mastic which he applied to the wound. His handkerchief, torn into strips, furnished him with ligatures to keep it in place. In this occupation another hour passed; but the answer came not.

When Ludovic entered the court at the usual dinner-hour, his brusk and business-like countenance announced no good news. He scarcely deigned to answer the questions of the prisoner, even by short and sharp replies. "*Diavolo!* can't you wait? You are in a great hurry. Give him time to write."

He seemed to have a presentiment of the rôle he would have to play, and prepared himself in advance.

Charney could not dine. He strove to control his impatience while waiting the sentence of life or death for Picciola; and to strengthen his courage, he constantly reiterated to himself that the governor could not, without being a most cruel man, refuse him so simple a request.

His impatience increased, however, more and more with the delay; he was surprised at it, as if the commandant could have no other affairs so pressing as that. At the slightest sound his eyes turned towards the little door by which he expected to receive his message.

The evening came — no answer! Night — nothing! He could not close his eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next day that response, so earnestly expected, was at last brought to him. The commandant said, in a dry and laconic style, that no change could be made in the walls, fosses, or fortifications of the citadel, without the express authorization of the governor of Turin; that, on the demand of Monsieur Charney, he would refer the matter to his Excellency; "*for*," added he, "*the very pavement of a prison court is a wall.*"

Charney stood confounded, after reading this message. To make the preservation of a flower a question of state! a displacement of fortifications! wait the decision of the governor of Turin! wait an age, when a day's delay was death! Would not this governor in his turn refer it to the minister, the minister to the senate, the senate to the Emperor? Ah! how at this moment his contempt for men was reawakened! Ludovic seemed to him only the agent of the executioner. At the cry of his despair, one responds in formal official language, the other urges his military orders.

Charney drew near to the invalid, whose brilliancy was tarnished, whose color was fading. He gazed

upon her with sadness. It was the happiness, the poetry of his life which was departing. Her perfume indicated a mistaken hour, like a watch whose mainspring is broken; each corolla-folded upon itself, has ceased to turn to the sun.

In the midst of these heart-breaking reflections, the voice of his fellow-captive reached him again.

"Dear sir," said the good old man, with his paternal accent, lowering his tone, and pressing his face close to the bars, to be as near him as possible, "if she dies, and I fear she must, what will you do alone, all alone? What occupations can interest you after that which has such a charm for you? You too will die from *ennui*. Solitude, once interrupted, becomes afterwards so heavy. You will not be able to endure it. It is as it would be with me, if they should now separate me from my daughter, that guardian angel whose smile has power to console me for all. As for your plant, the wind from the Alps has brought you the seed, or a bird in passing has dropped it from his beak into the court; but even if the same circumstance should bring you another Picciola, it would only be to renew your regret for the loss of the first, for from the beginning you would only look forward to its death from the same cause. Believe me, my dear sir, and consent that my friends act for you. Yield at last. Your liberty may be more easily obtained than you think. I hear already of many traits of clemency and generosity in the new Emperor He is even now at Turin, and Josephine accompanies him."

He pronounced the name of Josephine as if the certainty of success attached to it.

"At Turin?" exclaimed Charney, raising quickly his head, which had before been bent upon his breast.

"At Turin for the last two days," replied the old man, delighted to see that his good advice was not rejected as it had been before.

"And what is the exact distance from Fenestrella to Turin?"

"By the main road through Giaveno and Avigliano, nearly seven leagues."

"And in how short a time can the journey be accomplished?"

"Four or five hours at the least; for just now the route is obstructed by troops, baggage-wagons, and the carriages of all who are to be present at the approaching *fêtes*. The road which winds through the valley, following the river, is longer, without doubt; but I believe it will take less time."

"Tell me, sir, if through your communication with the world outside it would be possible for you to find some one who would go to Turin to-day — this very morning?"

"My daughter can procure a messenger."

"And you say that General Bonaparte — the First Consul" —

"The Emperor," gently interposed Girhardi.

"Yes, the Emperor — the Emperor is yet at Turin, you are sure?" continued Charney, absorbed in one

great resolution. "Yes, I will write to him, I will address a petition to — the Emperor."

He dwelt upon this word, as if to strengthen himself in the course he had resolved upon.

"Oh, God be praised!" cried the old man, "for it is from Him comes the good thought when human pride yields. Yes, write; address to him a petition for pardon. Fossombroni, Cotenna, and Delarue, my friends, will support you strongly, as they would me, with the minister Marescalchi, the Cardinal Caprara, and even Melzi who has just been appointed keeper of the seals of the new kingdom. My dear companion, perhaps we shall be released from this prison together, the same day: you, to recommence an active and full life; I, to accompany my daughter wherever she wishes to go."

"Pardon, Monsieur, pardon if I do not seem entirely satisfied with the mediators that you so kindly and disinterestedly offer me. My esteem and gratitude are yours; but it is to the Emperor himself that my petition must be sent, this evening, if possible, — to-morrow morning, at latest. Can you be sure of a faithful messenger?"

"As faithful as myself," said the old man, after a moment's reflection.

"Yet one more question," said Charney: "do you not fear that you may be compromised by the signal service that you are going to render me?"

"The pleasure of doing you a service prevents all fear, dear sir. If I can in the least contribute to

solace your misfortune, let come what will, I know how to submit to the decrees of heaven."

Charney felt himself stirred to the depths of his heart by these simple words. He raised his eyes moistened with tears to the old man.

"How I wish that I might press your hand," said he; and he raised his arm towards the little window. Girhardi stretched his down through the grating; but it was in vain, — he could not reach the hand that was extended to him. Then, inspired by one of those sentiments of tenderness so active in the heart of a recluse, he untied quickly his cravat, and retaining one end, threw the other to Charney, who seized it with eagerness, and a loving vibration of this insensible linen conveyed from one to the other their mutual emotion.

"I will save thee," whispered Charney, as he passed near Picciola.

Returning to his chamber, he took the finest and whitest of his handkerchiefs, carefully pointed his toothpick, renewed his ink, and set himself to his task. His petition completed, not without sharpest pangs of his rebellious pride, he fastened it to a little cord which hung from the window of the Italian, and which was immediately drawn up.

An hour after, the person charged with the task of conveying it to the Emperor, accompanied by a guide, took the route through the valley, following the right bank of the Doria Riparia. Both were on horseback; but they hastened in vain, for unexpected

obstacles retarded them. Recent rains had washed away the road; in many places the river had overflowed, and torrents united the river and the lake. Already the forges of Giaveno shone redder in the horizon, warning them that the light of day would soon fail them. Too happy then to return to the main road, they gained, not without difficulty, the magnificent avenue of Rivoli, and late in the night arrived at Turin.

There they learned that the Emperor-King had just left for Alexandria.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE next morning, at dawn of day, the city of Alexandria was arrayed in festal garb. An immense population swarmed in the streets decked with flags and tapestry, flowers and streamers. The crowd pressed from the town-hall, where were Napoleon and Josephine, to the arch of triumph erected at the extremity of the town, which they must pass in visiting the illustrious plains of Marengo.

On the road from Alexandria to Marengo, the same multitude of people, the same cries, the same blare of trumpets.

Never pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Lorette, never the ceremonies of the jubilee at Rome, had drawn crowds such as this, which flowed towards the scarcely cold field of battle.

Here was to be performed the most important of the *fêtes* of the day. The Emperor Napoleon was to be present to witness a simulated combat, in commemoration of the victory gained in this same place five years before by the First Consul Bonaparte.

Tables and mountebanks' booths line the route.

People eat, drink, and witness comedies in the open air. They even preach there; for more than one improvised pulpit is seen between the theatre and the ale-house. Monks, mingling with the crowd or holding themselves apart at the sides of the road, not content with giving their benediction to those who pass, exhort them to quietness and sobriety, and sell them little ivory crosses, and rosaries that have been blessed.

In the long and only street of the village of Marengo, all the houses, transformed into inns, present a tumultuous image of stir and confusion.

At all the windows, to attract and tempt the passers-by, are hung smoked hams, Italian sausages, garlands of partridges and quails, chaplets of croquets and confectionery. They press in and out, they crowd and jostle each other, — Italian, French, citizens and soldiers; the heaps of maccaroni, the pyramids of cakes and pastry, disappear in the hands of purchasers.

In dark and narrow stairways, a double line, ascending and descending, push and jostle. Some, the better to shield their provisions from the rapacity of their neighbors, hold them with upraised arms high above their heads, and in the darkness a longer or more skilful arm relieves them of the dainty burden, — whether a buttered loaf, figs, oranges, a ham, a larded quail, or even a pie in its crust, or a savory stew in its tureen, — the dish and its contents, all is taken. There are cries and jokes, and prolonged

aughter, from the upper to the lower stair. The thief of the ascending line, satisfied with his plunder, wheels about to descend. His victim in the descending stream, constrained to make a new purchase, turns to ascend; and the whole line, broken by the sudden and irregular flux and reflux, turning of necessity upon itself, in the midst of shouts of laughter, oaths, blows dealt at hazard, is thrust partly into the street, and partly into the rooms where the drinkers are singing already at the top of their voices.

Moving about among the tables loaded with dishes, and the benches crowded with guests, one sees hostess and maids, — the one with gay-colored apron, powdered hair, and the coquettish poniard, at that time the fashionable ornament, — the others in short petticoats, long braided tresses, naked feet and neck, brow and ears laden with gilded ornaments.

To these animated pictures of the road and the village, of the chamber and the street, — to this hum, these cries, these laughs, this din of words, rattling of glasses and plates, other pictures, other noises will soon succeed.

In an hour the village will tremble with the thunder of cannon — cannon almost harmless, it is true, breaking only windows. The street will resound with the cries of soldiers worked up to a warlike *furor* according to orders; and every house will be enveloped by the smoke of musketry produced by harmless powder.

Then beware of pillage, if the provisions have

not been placed in safety; beware too of the barefooted maid! for the mimic war apes sometimes the real in its license. It also imitates it in the brilliancy of its display; and no spectacle could be more majestic and imposing than that now preparing in the fields of Marengo.

Already a magnificent throne, surrounded with tricolored standards, is raised on one of the few hillocks which are on the plain. Already troops of all arms of the service, of all varieties of uniform, are deploying to take their places. The trumpet musters the cavalry; the roll of the drum seems to spread itself over the whole surface of the ground, which trembles under the artillery and ammunition wagons. The aides-de-camp, in their brilliant uniforms, pass and repass, galloping in all directions. The banners float in the wind, which at the same time causes the undulation of that moving sea of feathers, aigrettes, and tricolored plumes; the sun, that unfailing guest at the *fêtes* of Napoleon, that radiant illuminator of the pomps of the empire, shone unclouded, and turned to fire the gold of the embroideries, the bronze of the cannon, the helmets, the casques, and the sixty thousand bayonets with which the field bristled.

Soon the troops arriving with hurried march on the field of their operations, the crowd of curious spectators, flowing back, described an immense circle of retreat, as the ripples of the ocean are overwhelmed by an enormous wave, while a few horse

men charging against the lingering groups rapidly clear the field.

The village is deserted — the gay tents struck — the booths taken down — the songs and cries have ceased. On all sides are to be seen men interrupted in their sports or their repast, and women terrified by the flash of the sabres or the neighing of the chargers, running and dragging their children after them.

As the eye glances along the lines of that army, one can recognize without difficulty, by the countenances of the soldiers, those to whom the General-in-chief, Marshal Lannes, has assigned beforehand the part of vanquished or victors. The General himself is seen, followed by a numerous staff, reconnoitring the field on which he five years before so valiantly distinguished himself, distributing to each one his rôle.

In repeating the principal movements of the terrible day of the 14th of June, 1800, they will take care to omit the mistakes which were committed, for this is a strategic flattery, a madrigal with cannon-shots, that they are to offer the new Emperor and King.

Now the troops form in line, deploy, fall back, according to the word of command, when military symphonies are heard on the route from Alexandria; vague murmurs swell and increase from the assembled multitude, which. protected by the streams of the Tanaro, Bormida, the Orba, or the ravines of Tortona, form the waving and living girdle of this arena.

All at once the drums beat a salute, cries and *vivats* rise from all sides in the midst of clouds of dust, sabres flash in the sunlight, muskets are shouldered and clank as by a unanimous movement, and a brilliant chariot, drawn by eight horses caparisoned and blazoned with the arms of France and Italy, convey to the foot of their throne Josephine and Napoleon.

After having received the homage of all the Italian deputations, the envoys of Lucca, Genoa, Florence, Rome, and even Prussia, Napoleon, impatient of inactivity, springs upon his horse, and soon the entire plain is illumined with fire and covered with smoke.

Such were the sports of the young conqueror. War for his pastime, war for the accomplishment of his high destiny. It was a necessity to that fiery spirit, born for dominion, to whom the conquest of the world alone would have brought leisure.

An officer designated by Napoleon explained to Josephine, as she sat solitary upon her throne, half frightened by the spectacle, the meaning of the various evolutions, and the object of all the manœuvres. He showed her the Austrian General Melas driving the French from the village of Marengo, routing them at Pietra-Buona, at Castel-Ceriolo and Bonaparte suddenly arresting him in the midst of his triumph with only nine hundred men of the Consular Guard. Now he fixes her attention upon one of the most decisive moments of the battle

The republicans are giving way, but Desaix appears on the road from Tortona. The terrible Hungarian column, under the orders of Zach, begins to move, and marches to meet him.

But while the officer is speaking, Josephine's attention is diverted by a slight disturbance near her. Having asked the cause, she learns that a young girl, after having imprudently cleared the line of military operations, at the risk of being a thousand times crushed by a charge of cavalry or the wheels of artillery wagons, occasions this disturbance by her obstinate determination, notwithstanding the resistance of the guard and the remonstrances of the ladies of her suite, to penetrate even to her Majesty.

CHAPTER II.

On learning that the Emperor had quitted Turin for Alexandria, the daughter of Girhardi, — for it is she, she herself who, followed by a guide, has been the bearer of the petition of Charney, — Theresa was at first overcome and almost discouraged. But she remembered that she held in her hands the joy, the only hope of a poor captive. The Count was entirely ignorant as to the person who had undertaken the dangerous errand. Without regard to time or fatigue, at the risk of arriving too late, she persevered, and signified to the guide that the end of their journey must be, not Turin, but Alexandria.

"Ho! ho!" said the guide, scratching his ear "that is twice as far as we have come already."

"Well, we must start immediately."

"I am going to start immediately, Signora," replied he quietly, "but it will be to turn my back to Turin as well as to Alexandria. On the road to Rivoli I have a cousin whose daughter is about to be married; he will have to lodge me and my horses gratis; that is so much gained, to say nothing of the wedding-feast."

In answer to her exclamations, he said, "I do not refuse to wait till morning, and then conduct you back to Fenestrella, as was agreed. Will that suit you? No? A pleasant journey to you, Signora."

All her efforts to make him change his resolution were useless; his Piedmontese obstinacy was immovable.

But having undertaken this work of devotion, Theresa would not look back. Decided to continue her route alone, she begged the hostess of the inn where she had alighted, to procure her, without a moment's delay, the means of conveying her most rapidly to Alexandria. The hostess sent her servants to the city; they went from the gate of Suza to that of Po, from the new gate to that of the palace; but carriages, public and private, beasts of burden, and saddle-horses, had gone, or were engaged a long time in advance, on account of the festivities at Alexandria.

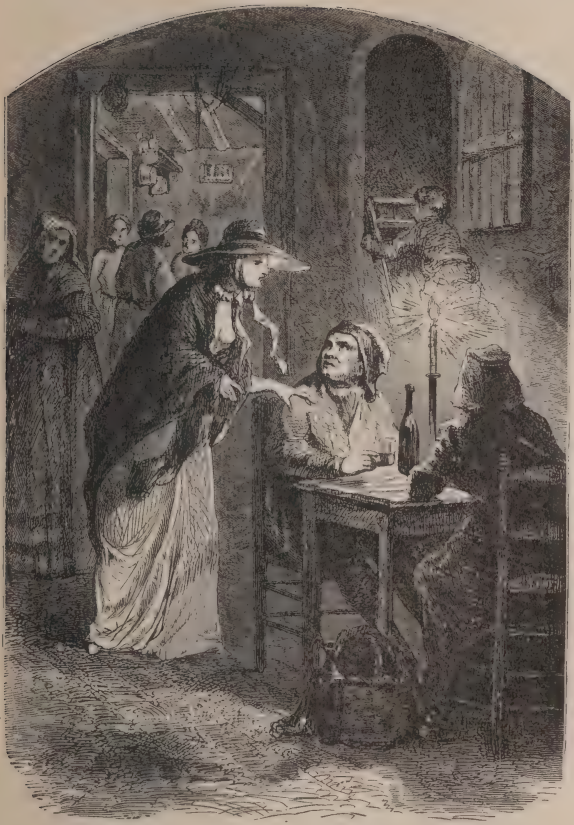
Theresa was in despair at this fatal *contre-temps*. Absorbed in reverie, with drooping head, she stood upon the step of the inn, not fearing to be recognized in her native town, thanks to the darkness, when the sound of wheels, made gay by bells attached to the mules, was heard. At the door where he was standing drew up two strong mules, with one of those itinerant dealer's wagons, the deep and capacious boxes of which, closed and padlocked, were closely packed with goods for sale, leaving only room for a narrow seat of leather, partly sheltered by an awning of oil-cloth.

The man and his wife, owners of the vehicle and its merchandise, alighted, giving audible grunts of satisfaction, stamping their feet, stretching their arms, to restore the circulation and awake themselves from their drowsiness. They greeted the hostess as an old acquaintance, and established themselves at once in the two corners of the chimney, warming their hands and feet at the fire of vine sticks which crackled on the hearth; then, having ordered the mules to be put in the stable, congratulating each other on having arrived at the end of their day's journey, they ordered supper, and talked of getting to bed as soon as possible.

The hostess, too, was preparing for rest. The yawning servants were closing the doors and windows, and Theresa still stood bowed down with disappointment, thinking of the time which was gliding away, the hope which was fading, the flower which was dying.

"A night, a whole night," said she to herself; "and the unhappy Count will be counting the minutes while I sleep; and to-morrow perhaps it will be impossible for me to find a conveyance."

She fixed a long and earnest look upon the two travellers eating their supper, as if her last resource was in them. She was ignorant what route they were to take, — whether they would or could take charge of her; and the poor girl, little accustomed to find herself alone, thus thrown upon herself among strangers, dared not ask. Impelled by her anxiety



withheld by her timidity, one foot forward, her lips parted, she remained in her place mute and undecided, when suddenly a servant presented her with a lighted candle and a key, pointing with her finger to the door of the chamber she was to occupy.

Recalled to a sense of her position and forced to decide, Theresa gently put aside the servant, and stepping toward the table where the couple were seated, said in a trembling voice, "Pardon my question; what route do you take from Turin?"

"The road to Alexandria, my pretty girl."

"To Alexandria! It is my good angel that has brought you here."

"Your good angel has brought us over very bad roads then, Signora," said the woman; "we are tired to death."

"But how can we serve you?" said the merchant.

"A pressing affair calls me to Alexandria; will you take me there?"

"Impossible," said the woman.

"Oh, I will pay you well — two pieces of St. John Baptist! ten livres of France."

"It is difficult," replied the husband. "In the first place, the seat is narrow — it is scarcely possible for three to sit upon it. It is true that you will not take much room. But there is another difficulty. We are going to the market of Revigano, near Asti, and not to Alexandria, and that is only half-way."

"Well," said the young girl, "take me to the gates of Asti; but start to-night, immediately."

"Impossible! impossible!" exclaimed the couple. "We do not sell either our sleep or our fatigue."

"I will double the sum," interposed Theresa, in a low voice.

The husband looked at his wife with a questioning gesture.

"No, no," said she, "it will make us ill. Besides, Losca and Zoppa need rest. Do you want to kill them?"

"Four pieces!" murmured the husband, "four pieces!"

"Losca and Zoppa are worth more than that."

"Double price for half the way!"

"What of that? one sequin of Venice is worth a double parpaiole of Genoa."

Nevertheless the idea of the four pieces, the bait of a gain so easily made, soon produced its effect upon the wife as upon the husband; and after some resistance on one side, and reiterated supplications and prayers on the other, the mules were again put before the wagon.

Theresa, wrapped in her mantle for protection from the chilly night-air, arranged herself as well as she could on the seat between the man and woman. Just as the clocks were striking eleven, they drove from the door of the inn.

In her impatience to accomplish the object of her journey, and return good news to Fenestrella, Theresa wished to feel herself borne by coursers rapid as the wind; but the heavy wagon lumbered slowly

along the road; the mules paced steadily on, step by step, raising slowly one foot after the other, and the regular tinkling of their bells seemed to add to the *nonchalant* air of their movements. For some time she said nothing, hoping that they would become excited when warmed with motion, or that the whip of the driver would quicken their pace; but seeing that, instead of any such prompting, he was satisfied with an occasional clicking of the tongue, she took courage to say to him that it was of the greatest importance that she should arrive as soon as possible at Asti, in order that she might reach Alexandria in the morning.

"My good child," replied her new guide, "it does not please me any more than you to spend the night in counting the stars, but a merchant must look after his merchandise. My load is crockery, that I am taking to sell at Revigano, and if my mules were to trot, they would make potsherds of all my stock."

"What, sir, you are a crockery merchant?" cried Theresa, in a tone of consternation.

"A china merchant," said the wife.

"Alas, alas!" sighed she, "but at least you can go a little faster."

"Do you wish to ruin me?"

"I am in such haste to arrive."

"And what of us, my good girl? Is that a reason why we should break everything?"

By way of concession, however, for a few minutes the crockery merchant increased the frequency of

nis clickings of the tongue; but the mules were too well accustomed to their pace to change it so easily.

Theresa then began to reproach herself bitterly for not having inquired before, how long it would take to reach Asti; she reproached herself above all for not having gone herself, in Turin, to seek, with the knowledge that she had of the city, a more prompt means of conveyance; now there was nothing to do but to be resigned.

The wagon jogged along at the same pace. Losca and Zoppa went neither faster nor slower; only choosing the unpaved side of the road, the travellers were relieved from the racket of the wheels upon the stones. The merchant and his wife, who until now had been exchanging conjectures as to their probable success at the fair of Revigano, relapsed into silence. Theresa, in the darkness and stillness, notwithstanding the numbness of her feet from the cold, lulled by the monotonous tinkling of the bells, was overcome with drowsiness. Her head at first nodding from one side to the other, seeking a pillow sometimes on the shoulder of the man, and then on that of his wife, sunk at last heavily upon her breast.

"Lean upon me, my poor girl," said the merchant, "and good-night to you."

She followed his counsel, arranged herself as she best could, and slept so soundly that the light of dawning day first caused her to open her eyes. Astonished to find herself in the open air and on the high road, she roused herself, and looking about, perceived

with surprise and terror that the wagon no longer moved, and seemed for a long time to have been motionless in this place.

The merchant, his wife, the mules themselves, all slept profoundly, and the tinkling of the bells was hushed.

Theresa saw not far behind her the tops of several steeples; and through the morning mists, causing on the horizon fantastic groupings, she saw what she fancied were the roofs and towers of the Superga, the *château* of Mille-Fleurs, of La Vigne and La Reine, the church of the Capuchins, and all the magnificent buildings on the heights of Turin.

"Merciful Heaven!" cried she, "where are we? Day is breaking, and we are scarcely out of the suburbs."

The merchant, awaked by her cries, after rubbing his eyes, hastened to reassure her.

"We are approaching Asti," said he, "and the steeples which you see behind you are those of Revigano. There is nothing to scold Losca and Zoppa for: they only fell asleep, and they had need enough of it. I hope they have not taken advantage of my sleep to trot."

Theresa smiled. He gave an unexpected crack of his whip, which aroused at once his wife and his mules.

At the gate of Asti the worthy man took leave of the young girl, after assisting her to alight, and signing the sign of the cross on the twenty francs which

he received from her, turned straight about, taking the road for Revigano.

Half the route was then accomplished. But Theresa no longer hoped to arrive for the early evee of the Emperor.

"However," thought she, "an Emperor will rise late."

O how gladly she would have plunged again below the horizon the sun, which announced its coming by the increasing light. It seemed to her that everything about her ought to feel the same haste which agitated her, — that she would see the whole population of Asti astir, in preparation for a journey to Alexandria, and in that multitude of vehicles of all sorts she would surely obtain a place, were it even in a cart.

What then was her astonishment, upon her entrance into the town, to find the streets deserted and silent. The sun, just risen, illuminated only the roofs of the highest houses and the domes of the churches.

She remembered that one of her maternal relatives had lived in Asti for many years. He might be of great use to her; and seeing, on the ground floor of a small house, a bright light shining through the latticed window, she ventured to knock and inquire where this relative lived.

The casement opened, a harsh, shrill voice answered that the individual in question had lived for the last three months at his country-house, and the casement was closed again.

A sense of the loneliness of her situation in the deserted streets overwhelmed her, and seeing an image of the Virgin in a niche in the wall, before which a lamp was burning, she threw herself upon her knees before it, and rose from her prayer for help and protection with renewed courage. Scarcely had she risen, when the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, and in a moment a man appeared.

"Direct me, sir, I pray you," said she to him, "where to find a carriage that will take me to Alexandria."

"You are too late, my good girl," replied the stranger; "all the carriages and carts have been engaged this three days;" and he passed on.

A second came towards her. At the same question from Theresa, he stopped, and regarding her with a hard and angry glance, muttered, "You, too, love the French, then. Cursed race!" and hastened on more rapidly than the other.

The poor girl stood for some time thoroughly intimidated, but regained courage to ask her question for the third time, on seeing a young workman come out from a house, singing as he went to his work.

"Ah, ah, Signora," said he, with a good-natured air "you want to see a battle! But there is no place there for pretty girls. Believe me, you had better stay with us. There is a *fête* to-day, and the best dancers will quarrel which shall have you for partner in the Contadina. You are worth a quarrel. A little war in your honor, eh? will not that tempt you?"

And he advanced towards her with a familiar bow but at one indignant glance from her he resumed his song and pursued his way. A fourth, a fifth, passed her in their turn. Theresa no longer interrogated them, but watched carefully the gates as they opened, and the carriages standing in the courtyards. At last, not without difficulty, and by special favor, she was allowed to take the place, as far as Annone, of a passenger whose seat was engaged from there to Alexandria. At Annone, and again at Feliziano, she encountered a variety of difficulties; but she triumphed over all.

Knowing before she arrived at Alexandria that the Emperor had left there, she did not delay a moment, but on foot joined the crowd pressing towards Marengo.

Jostled on every side by the rabble, taking advantage of every break in the crowd, skirting the edges of the road, she lost no opportunity of gaining ground on those in advance of her. Inattentive to the noise of the trumpets, to the shows of the jugglers, in the midst of this crowd of pleasure-seekers, who rushed from side to side, singing, shouting, leaping with joy in clouds of dust, Theresa made her way, the only stranger to the festivities of the day, with anxious face, and eye fixed and preoccupied, occasionally raising her hand to wipe the drops from her brow, the gravity of her countenance presenting a strange contrast to the joyous faces around her.

Her whole will and energy are concentrated upon

making her way. Scarcely during all this time does the thought of the end which she wishes to attain present itself to her mind.

But a sudden halt imposed upon the crowd by the stopping of the front ranks, forced her to slacken her pace, and thought returned. She thought of her father who would soon begin to be tormented with anxiety in her prolonged absence, for the guide who had abandoned her at Turin could not gain admission to him to explain the cause; of Charney, cursing the choice of a messenger perhaps, and accusing her of carelessness and forgetfulness; then, with a sudden fear, she put her hand in her bosom, as if by some chance she might have lost the petition. Then her father presented himself anew to her eyes, — the old man reproaching himself for having yielded to her entreaties, believing his daughter lost through his fault. At the thought of this adored father tears filled her eyes, but her painful reverie was suddenly interrupted by shouts of merriment. A large circle had formed just behind her, around which the crowd seemed to eddy. Theresa turned, and instantly her hands were seized by one on each side, and, notwithstanding her resistance, her fatigue, and above all her indisposition to any gayety of the sort, she found herself constrained to appear as an active participator in a grand *farandole*, which went whirling along the road, recruiting as it went all the pretty girls and young men, who willingly took part in it.

This was not the least painful annoyance of the journey; but her courage did not yet abandon her, for she believed she was near the end.

She at length succeeded in disengaging herself from this singular situation, and making a final effort to open a way through the mass in front of her, she arrived at last in sight of the plain; her astonished eye, after wandering a moment over that splendid army covering the field of Marengo, was suddenly illuminated as it rested with delight upon the little hill upon which was erected the imperial throne.

All her strength, all her courage, all her ardor returned; but how to arrive there through those thousands of men and horses — could she think of it? But that which at first had seemed an obstacle proved rather an aid.

The foremost ranks of the crowd pouring in torrents from Alexandria, pressed by those behind, made an irruption on to the plain, that seemed as if they would take possession of the field of battle.

A small body of cavalry instantly galloped towards the spot, and the glistening of their naked sabres and the rush of the horses, quickly forced them back within their limits. All evacuated the ground as quickly as they had gained it — all with the exception of one person.

In a little hollow on the plain flowed a spring, surrounded by a small grove of trees and a hedge of hawthorn. Theresa, pale and trembling, directing her steps by instinct towards the throne, had been

thrust forward by the crowd to the edge of the grove Terrified by this violent impulsion, fearful of being crushed against the trees, closing her eyes like the child who believes the danger past when he no longer sees it, she threw her arms around the trunk of a poplar, and rested so for some time motionless, her ears filled with the hum of the retreating crowd and the rustling of the foliage.

The retreating movement was so rapid at the approach of the soldiers, that when Theresa raised her head and looked about, she found herself alone, all alone, separated from the army by the clump of trees and the hawthorn hedge, and from the multitude by a thick cloud of dust raised by the last undulation of the fleeing wave.

Not hesitating to penetrate the hedge, she found herself in the grove of trees. In a few moments, her emotion becoming somewhat calmed, she could take cognizance of her surroundings.

Shaded by about twenty poplar and aspen trees, the spring, welling with a little bubbling noise out of the ground carpeted with moss and ivy, gave birth to a little rivulet, whose course over the plain could be traced by the tufts of blue forget-me-nots and clusters of white ranunculus which embroidered its banks. The coolness and moisture of the air aided to dispel the agitation and trouble of the terrified girl. It seemed to her that she had found an oasis of coolness and quiet, and that the belt of hawthorn was her shield against the dust, the heat, and the confusion.

For an instant there seems to be silence on the plain; she hears neither the word of command of the officers, the huzzas of the crowd, nor the neighing of the horses. She is conscious of a singular movement overhead — a continuous twittering and fluttering in the trees. She looks up and sees the branches of the poplars and aspens covered with an innumerable quantity of sparrows, finches, linnets, and even the larger pigeons and blackbirds, driven by the noise and tumult, like the young girl, to seek shelter in this solitude of verdure. One would think that fear had paralyzed them both in wing and voice; not a cry, not a song was heard from one of the little creatures so crowded upon the branches which bent under their weight, that one might say the poplars and aspens bore feathers rather than leaves. Even when regiments of cavalry, with the noise of clarions, advanced and stationed themselves in the same place from which the crowd had just been driven, the birds did not abandon their asylum. Sharpening their bills and fluttering their wings, they anxiously waited the end of all this confusion; and it was this movement that had attracted the attention of Theresa.

However, the soldiers, which cut off all communication with the road, soon occupied all her thoughts.

"It is only a harmless combat," said she to herself; "and if I have been imprudent, God knows the object of my efforts; he will protect me." Directing then her attention through the opposite side

of this island of verdure, she saw at the distance of about three hundred paces the throne of Napoleon and Josephine. The intervening space was sometimes occupied by the manœuvres of troops, and sometimes left clear so that a passage across was possible.

Theresa takes courage — the moment has come — she presses aside the hedge to pass through, when a sense of the disorder of her toilet fills her with shame and confusion. Her tresses, unbraided and dishevelled, are floating over her shoulders; her hands and face are soiled with dust. To present herself thus before the sovereigns of France and Italy would be to insure her repulse, and compromise perhaps the success of her mission.

She reënters the thicket, unties her straw hat, shakes out her dark hair, smooths and rebraids it, and adjusts her dress; then kneeling at the spring, she bathes her hands and face, and, bowing herself still lower, offers to Heaven a fervent prayer for her father and for Charney.

Ah! was not this a charming little picture, set as by chance in the centre of a grand battle-piece of Salvator Rosa, this chaste toilet of a young maiden, made in the midst of an army?

While Theresa was watching anew for a favorable moment to attempt to cross the field, suddenly from all sides were heard the detonations of artillery. The earth seemed to tremble under her feet, and the birds perched upon the trees, with cries of terror, made their disordered and bewildered flight for the woods of Valpedo and shady groves of Voghera.

The battle had commenced!

Theresa, stunned by the noise of cannon, terrified by all this tumult, stood in a sort of stupor, with her eyes fixed upon the throne, which, by turns, was visible for a moment, and then was hidden by a curtain of lances and bayonets.

After a half-hour, during which every thought was obliterated by a sense of amazement and terror, the energy of her soul resumed its force. She examined calmly the obstacles she must vanquish to reach the throne, and decided that they were not insurmountable.

Two columns of infantry formed in two lines, of which the double base rested upon the thicket, had just opened a sharp fire of musketry upon each other. She hoped to be able, under cover of this cloud of smoke, to make her way unnoticed. While she hesitated, a troop of hussars, burning with thirst, invaded her asylum. Then she hesitated no longer; modesty gave new life to her courage. She rushed forth, running between the two columns of infantry; and when the smoke began to clear away, the soldiers raised a cry of surprise on perceiving in the midst of them the white robe and straw hat of a woman, — a beautiful young girl, who, notwithstanding their cries, pursued her way. At this moment a squadron of cavalry galloped up to support one of the lines. Theresa just escaped being thrown down and crushed, by the captain's seizing her in his arms; and without inquiring by what chance a young girl was in the

field of battle, he gave her in charge of two soldiers, to convey her to the spot where were grouped Josephine's attandents.

One of the horsemen raised her to the saddle behind him, and it was thus that she approached the place where the ladies of the suite of the Empress, accompanied by several aides-de-camp and the deputies of the cities of Italy, were stationed.

Arrived there, at last so near the goal, it was impossible that her enterprise should fail. She had surmounted too many difficulties to be vanquished by the last. When, on her demand to speak to the Emperor, she was told that he was in the field at the head of his troops, "Then," cried she, with firmness, "I wish to see the Empress;" but one was not more easy than the other. To free themselves from her importunity, they endeavored to intimidate her, but in vain. They told her that she must wait till the end of the evolutions; she refused to do so, and insisted upon forcing her way to the throne. They held her; she struggled, and raised her voice with such vehemence that it attracted the attention of Josephine.

CHAPTER III.

While Josephine was giving her orders, an opening in the crowd showed her Theresa, imploring, restrained by strong arms, yet resisting. At a gracious sign from the Empress, which every one about her knew how to interpret, they released the captive, who, finding herself free, sprang forward, threw herself on her knees, panting, at the foot of the throne, and drawing quickly from her bosom a handkerchief, which she waved in the air, cried, "Madame, Madame, a poor prisoner!"—

Josephine could not understand the meaning of this handkerchief offered to her.

"Do you wish to present a petition to me?" said she.

"This is it, Madame, this is it, the petition of a poor prisoner." And the tears sprang from the eyes of the supplicant, while a smile of hope illuminated her countenance. The Empress replied to her by another smile, gave her her hand, forced her to rise, and bending towards her with a manner full of kindness, said, "Come, come, my child, be reassured. He interests you very much, then, this poor prisoner?"

Theresa blushed and cast down her eyes.

"I have never spoken to him," replied she, "but he is so unhappy! Read, Madame!"

Josephine unfolded the handkerchief, moved to pity in thinking how much misery and privation this linen, so painfully written upon with an artificial ink, bore witness to; then, stopping at the first line, —

"But it is addressed to the Emperor."

"What matter! Are you not his wife? Read, read, Madame, in mercy read! it is so urgent!"

The combat was at its height. The Hungarian column, although under fire from the artillery of Marmont, renewed its forward movement. Zach and Desaix were face to face, and the result of their encounter was to decide the salvation or the loss of the army.

The cannon thundered on every side; the field of battle was aflame; the shouts of the soldiers, mingled with the clang and roar of battle, caused an agitation of the air as if a tempest was raging.

The Empress read that which follows: —

"Sire:

"Two stones less in the court of my prison will not shake the foundations of your empire, and such is the only favor that I ask of your Majesty. It is not for myself that I ask your protection; but in this desert of stones, where I am expiating my offences against you, one single being has brought some solace to my pain, one single being has thrown some

charm upon my life. It is a plant, Sire, which has spontaneously sprung up between the pavements of the court where I am permitted sometimes to breathe the air and see the sky. Accuse me not of delirium or folly. This flower has been for me an object of study so sweet and so consoling! My eyes fixed upon this plant have been opened to the truth; to it I owe reason, repose, life perhaps. I love it as you love glory.

"At this moment my poor plant is dying for want of space in the ground, — it is dying, and I cannot succor it; the commandant of Fenestrella would send my complaint to the governor of Turin, and when they have decided, my plant will be dead. Therefore, Sire, I address you, you who by one word can do all, can save my plant. Permit the lifting of these two stones, which weigh upon me as upon it. Save it from destruction — save me from despair! Give the order; it is the life of my plant that I ask of you. I implore, I entreat you upon my bended knees, and I swear to you that on my heart shall be inscribed the record of your goodness.

"Why should it die? It has, I acknowledge, lightened the punishment that your powerful hand has inflicted upon me; but it has also humbled my pride, and brings me now, a suppliant, to your feet. From the height of your double throne look down upon us. Can you comprehend what ties may bind a man to a plant in this isolation which leaves for a man only a vegetative existence? No, you canno

know, and may God guard you from ever knowing what effect imprisonment may produce upon the firmest and proudest spirit. I do not complain of my captivity; I support it with resignation; prolong it, let it continue through my life; but mercy for my plant!

"Remember, Sire, that this mercy that I implore of your Majesty is in vain if it is not granted immediately — even to-day. You may hold the sword suspended for a time over the head of the condemned one, and raise it at last to grant him pardon. But nature follows other laws than the justice of man; two days more, and even the Emperor Napoleon can do nothing for the flower of the captive of Fenestrella.

"CHARNEY."

At that moment a storm of artillery rent the air; a dense smoke, cut into circles and lozenges of fire by the flashes of the discharge, covered the field of battle with a vast net-work of light and shade; then the firing ceased, and it seemed as if a hand, stretched from on high, removed suddenly this curtain of cloud which hid the combatants. Then a magnificent spectacle broke upon the sight. That brilliant charge in which Desaix had lost his life, was made. Zach and his Hungarians, encountered in front by Boudet, harassed on the left flank by the cavalry of Kellerman, were thrown into disorder, when the intrepid Consul, reëstablishing at once his new line of battle from Castel-Ceriolo to Saint-Julien, resumed the

offensive, overthrew the Imperialists at every point, and forced Mélas to sound a retreat.

This sudden change of position, these grand movements of the army, this flux and reflux of men, obeying the voice of one leader, he alone immovable in the midst of that apparent disorder, — there was something in all this which could not but impress the coldest imagination. From the groups of spectators around the throne burst acclamations and *vivats*, which at last drew the Empress from the profound meditation in which she was plunged. For of these latter and most brilliant manœuvres and imposing tableaux passing before her, the future queen of Italy had seen nothing, as she sat, lost in thought, with her eyes fixed upon this singular petition, which she looked at but no longer read.

Her first glance was to reassure the young girl standing before her, who also had been lost in reverie.

Joyous, enchanted by this smile so full of sweet promises, Theresa, certain of success, kissed again and again with warmest gratitude that hand at once so frail and so strong, on which glittered the nuptial ring of Napoleon. Then, leaving the throne, she joined the group of women, and, as soon as the plain was free, she sought a church or chapel, where in silence she might shed her tears, and offer up her thanksgivings.

CHAPTER IV.

Was it not natural that the Empress-Queen should be seized with a sentiment of the liveliest pity in reading this petition? Ought not every word to have roused all her sympathy? For she was a worshipper of flowers. It was her science, her passion; and often had she forgotten, in her beautiful conservatories of Malmaison, the *éclat* and the *ennui* of power, in watching a bud as it opened, or studying the structure of a corolla. There often she was more happy in contemplating the purple of the cactus than the purple of her imperial mantle; and the perfume of her magnolias was to her more intoxicating than the poisonous flatteries of her courtiers. There she loved to reign, uniting under one sceptre a thousand floral subjects from all quarters of the globe. She *knew* them, — she classified them, — she ranged them in regiments according to order and race; and when a new subject presented itself to her for the first time, she knew, by analyzing, how to question it of its age and habits, and to learn from itself its name and family; then it was placed in the group of its brothers, to take its natural rank; for there each tribe had its flag, each family its guidon.

Following the example of Napoleon, she respected the laws and customs of a vanquished people. Plants of all countries found again in the hot-houses of Malmaison their natural soil and their native climate. It was a world in miniature. One saw there in a circumscribed space meadows and rocks, the soil of virgin forests, and the sand of the desert; banks of clay and marl, lakes, cascades, and inundated strands; one might pass from the heat of the tropics to the refreshing climate of the temperate zone. There all the different races grew and developed side by side, only separated by walls of verdure or frontiers of glass.

When Josephine here held her review, the sight of certain flowers gave birth to sweetest reveries. The hydrangea had but recently borrowed the name of Hortensia from her daughter. Thoughts of glory also were suggested to her; for, after the triumphs of Bonaparte, she too claimed her share of the spoils of war, and *souvenirs* of Italy and Egypt grew and blossomed under her eyes. The soldenella of the Alps, the violet of Parma, the adonis of Castiglione, the carnation of Lodi, the willow of the Orient, the cross of Malta, the lily of the Nile, the hibiscus of Syria, the rose of Damietta, — such were *her* conquests. And these at least France still retains.

In the midst of all her treasures, she had her favorite flower, her flower of adoption, her beautiful jasmine of Martinique, the seed of which she had gathered, sown, and cultivated; it recalls to her her

native land, her childhood, her ornaments and crowns of her girlhood, the paternal roof, and her early wedded love.

Ah! how well she comprehends the fears of the unhappy man for his plant! How much he must love it — his only one! And how could she but be touched by the fate of the poor prisoner? The widow of Beauharnais had not always dwelt in a consular or imperial palace. She has not forgotten her own days of captivity. Then this Charney, Josephine remembers him in society; so calm, so proud, so listless in the midst of the pleasures of the world; a scorner of the sweetest human affections. What has so changed him? Who has had power to unbend this haughty spirit? Thou who didst refuse to bend the knee even before thy God art now a suppliant crying for mercy for thy plant! Ah! it shall be preserved to thee.

In this state of mind, the last manœuvres of the troops, all this vain simulation of battle, caused her only impatience and annoyance; for every moment lost might peril the existence of the flower of the captive.

The moment that Napoleon, surrounded by his generals, came to rejoin her, stirred with the excitement of the warrior, and expecting her felicitations, she received him — her eye flashing, and her voice clear and ringing, as if it was a question of a new victory, and it was her turn to put forth all the activity of a commander — with the exclamation, "Sire, an

order for the governor of Fenestrella! An express messenger on the instant!" And she held the handkerchief stretched with both hands, that he might read it immediately.

Napoleon, after surveying her from head to foot, with an astonished and displeased air, turned on his heel, and passed on. One would have said that he completed his review in her — simply that she was the last to pass under inspection.

According to his usual habit he then went to visit the field of battle, which no blood had reddened, and where lay upon the ground only the unripe harvest. The wheat and corn were trampled and cut to pieces. In some places the earth, deeply ploughed and torn, bore witness to the evolutions of the artillery; here and there were scattered the gantlets of the dragoons, plumes and epaulets; then a few limping foot-soldiers, and foundered horses, — that was all.

At one time, however, the affair had threatened to become more grave. The soldiers occupying the village of Marengo, in the character of Austrians, hesitated in performing their rôle of "vanquished," and prolonged their resistance beyond the time indicated in the programme. An active irritation was the result. The two regiments were of different corps, and were imbued with garrison rivalries. Insult and provocation resulted in the crossing of bayonets. A terrible collision seemed inevitable. Nothing but the utmost authority of the generals prevented the mock fight from becoming a real com-

bat. At last they consented to fraternize in exchanging gourds; but the gourds were empty; to fill them, they entered forcibly the cellars of the village. Excess ran riot; but at the cries of *Vive l'empereur!* all was placed to the account of enthusiasm. After repeated parleys and health-drinkings, the "Austrians consented to beat a reeling retreat, and the French victors made their entrance into Marengo, dancing the *farandola*, singing the *Marseillaise*, mingling with their shouts their old but now forbidden cry of *Vive la république! Then* all was placed to the account of drunkenness.

The troops having again formed in line, Napoleon distributed the cross of honor among the old soldiers who five years before had fought in the same place. In their turn, the principal Cisalpine magistrates received decorations from him. Then, with Josephine, he laid the first stone of a monument destined to perpetuate the memory of the battle of Marengo. After which the Emperor, the Empress, the ambassadors, the magistrates, the people, and the army, returned to Alexandria.

And the fate of Picciola was not yet decided!

CHAPTER V.

On the evening of that day, Josephine and Napoleon, after the official dinner at which they had been present, were in one of the apartments which had been prepared for them in the Hôtel de Ville of Alexandria, — the one dictating letters to his secretary, pacing the room and rubbing his hands with an air of satisfaction, the other before a lofty mirror, admiring, with *naïve* coquetry, the elegance of her robes, and the splendor of the jewels with which she was adorned.

When the secretary was dismissed, Napoleon seated himself, and leaning both his elbows upon a table covered with crimson velvet fringed with gold, rested his head on his hands, and fell into a reverie, the subject of which was far from painful, judging from the expression of his face.

But Josephine soon wearied of the silence which ensued. He had already once that day treated her rudely in the matter of the petition; and aware that she had been maladroit in too much precipitation she determined again to choose the moment more wisely. She believed that now the right time had come; and seating herself on the other side of the

table opposite her husband, she too leaned upon her elbows, and, like him, affected an air of abstraction; soon their eyes met with a smile.

"What are you thinking of?" said Josephine to him, with a caressing tone and look.

"I am thinking," said he, "that the diadem is very becoming to you, and that it would be a great pity if I had neglected to place one in your jewel-casket."

The smile of Josephine gradually faded, while that of Napoleon became more decided, for he loved to combat the painful apprehensions which always took possession of her when she contemplated the height to which they had lately risen. Noble woman! it was not for herself that she trembled.

"Are you not better pleased to see me Emperor than General?" pursued he.

"Certainly; as Emperor you have the right to grant mercy, and I have a favor to ask of you."

Now it was on the face of the husband that the smile faded, to brighten on the face of the wife. Knitting his brows, he prepared himself to be firm, fearing that the influence which Josephine exercised upon his heart might lead him into some foolish weakness.

"Again, Josephine! You have promised me not to attempt in this way again to interrupt the course of justice. Do you think that the right to exercise mercy is granted us only to satisfy the caprices of our hearts? No; we ought to use it only to soften

the too rigorous punishment of the law, or to repair the errors of the tribunal. Always to extend the hand of forgiveness to one's enemies, is only to augment their number and their insolence."

"Nevertheless, Sire," replied Josephine, with difficulty restraining a burst of laughter, "you will accord me the favor that I implore of your Majesty."

"I doubt it."

"And I do not doubt it. First and before all, I demand the removal of two oppressors! Yes, Sire, let them be displaced; let them be driven out, forced away, if necessary!"

And speaking thus, she covered her mouth with her handkerchief, for, seeing the astonished face of Napoleon, she could no longer restrain her mirth.

"How? you urge me to punish! you, Josephine? And who are the guilty ones?"

"Two paving-stones, Sire, which are in the way, in a court-yard."

And the laughter so long restrained broke forth in a merry peal.

He rose quickly, and crossing his arms behind him, regarded her with an air of doubt and surprise.

"How? what do you mean? Two paving-stones! Are you jesting?" — "No," said she; and rising, she approached him, and with her graceful Creole *nonchalance* leaning her two clasped hands on his shoulder, said, — "On these two stones depend a precious existence. Listen to me, Sire; I invoke all your good-will while I speak."

She then recounted to him the whole story of the petition, and all that she had learned from the young girl concerning the prisoner, (whose name, however, she did not mention,) and of the devotion of the poor child; and in speaking of the prisoner, of his flower, and the love which he bore it, the words flowed from her lips gracious, tender, caressing, full of charm and of that eloquence in which her heart so naturally expressed itself.

In listening, the Emperor smiled, — and the smile was born of admiration of his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

Charney counted the hours, the minutes, the seconds. It seemed to him that the minutest divisions of time were heaping themselves one upon another to weigh upon and crush his flower. Two days had passed; no messenger brought him any tidings. Girhardi, restless and anxious, knew not what to think of this silence and delay; he suggested obstacles, answered for the zeal and devotion of the person charged with the message, (without naming his daughter,) and strove to rekindle in the heart of his companion a hope that was fast fading in his own. "Theresa, my child, what may have happened to thee?" said he to himself in despair.

The third day passed without bringing to him his daughter.

During the fourth day Girhardi did not show himself at the little window of the court. Charney could not see him; but had he listened attentively he might have heard the prayers, mingled with sobs, which the poor father addressed to Heaven to avert this new and terrible blow.

A black veil seemed to have been suddenly drawn over this wretched place, which until now, even in

the absence of liberty, had been visited by occasional rays of joy and happiness.

The plant drew nearer and nearer its end; and Charney, inconsolable, stood by, watching the death-agony of Picciola. He had a double cause of affliction, — the loss of the object of his affection, the charm of his life, and to have humiliated himself for naught. What! should his haughty head be bent in vain? Should he on his knees beg a favor, and be repulsed?

As if everything conspired against Charney, Ludovic, until now so communicative, so genuine, seemed to avoid even addressing a word to him. Taciturn and surly, he came and went in the performance of his duties, smoking his pipe, scarcely glancing at him, apparently vexed with him for his misfortune.

The truth was that Ludovic, as soon as he knew of the refusal of the commandant, foresaw the time when he should find himself placed between his duty and his inclination. Duty must prevail, and he put on an air of brutality and ill-nature to give himself courage.

This mode of action is common with persons unrefined by education. They repress the generous impulses of their hearts when it is necessary for them to do harsh deeds, instead of softening the harshness by an expression of kindly feeling. It had been by deeds, not words, that Ludovic had always shown the goodness of his heart. Now that

deeds of kindness were interdicted, he spoke no word. The secret pity which he felt for the man to whom his office compelled him to administer the tyranny of those in authority, manifested itself in anger with the man himself. He forced himself to appear insensible in becoming the agent of a pitiless order. If so he could draw upon himself hatred, so much the better — his duty would be easier. There must be war between the victim and the executioner — between the captive and the jailer.

When the hour for the prisoner's dinner arrived, Ludovic saw Charney standing beside his plant, in profound and mournful contemplation. He did not now, as formerly, advance gayly, saluting his god-daughter with caressing titles, and asking after the health of *Monsieur* and *Madame;* he crossed the court with a rapid step, affecting to suppose that Charney was in his chamber, and that he must hasten to carry him his dinner. But at a movement of Charney their eyes met, and Ludovic stood still, struck with surprise at the change that so few days had wrought in the countenance of the prisoner.

Watching and anxiety had furrowed his brow; his colorless lips and face, his wasted cheeks, gave him a broken air, which the disorder of his hair and beard made still more marked. Spite of himself, Ludovic was stirred by pitiful emotion during this survey; but all at once, recalling without doubt his grand resolutions, he glanced from the man to the plant, winked ironically, shrugged his shoulders with

a mocking gesture, whistled an air, and was about to take his departure, when, with a mournful but expressive voice, Charney said to him, "Ludovic, what have I done to you?"

"To me? — to me? — nothing," replied the jailer, troubled by the tone of reproach, and more moved than he wished to appear.

"Then," said the Count, advancing towards him and seizing his hand, "let us save her! there is yet time, and I have found the means. Yes; it cannot trouble the commandant; indeed he need know nothing of it. Procure for me some earth and a box — we will raise the stones — but only for an instant. Who will know it? We will transplant"—

"Tut, tut, tut!" said Ludovic, bruskly drawing away his hand; "to the devil with your flower! It has made trouble enough for all of us, to begin with you, who will fall ill again. Make a drink of her; that is all she is good for now."

Charney regarded him with a glance of indignation and scorn.

"If only you were concerned," continued Ludovic, "it is your affair, and that is all; but the poor old man that you have deprived of his daughter, — he will never see her again, and to you he will owe it all."

"His daughter! How? cried the Count.

"Ay, *how*, to be sure!" continued the other, setting his basket of provisions on the ground, crossing his arms, and taking the attitude and air of a man

who is going to scold vigorously; "one whips the horses, and does not wish the carriage to roll on! One strikes the dagger, and is surprised at the wound! What nonsense. You wished to write to the Emperor, and you did so; very well — it is against the orders of the commandant, and he will punish you when he hears of it; that is right enough. But you needed a messenger to carry your letter, since you could not carry it yourself. This messenger was the young lady."

"What! that young girl — she" —

"You may affect astonishment; did you suppose your correspondence with the Emperor was to be by telegraph? — the telegraph has other work to do. At all events, the commandant has discovered all; — I do not know how, — by the guide perhaps, for the young lady could not travel the route alone. Now the gate of the citadel is closed to her; she and her father must live apart. Whose fault is it?"

Charney buried his face in his hands. "Unfortunate old man!" said he; "his only consolation! — And does he know?" —

"He has known all since yesterday. Judge how much he loves you. — But your dinner is getting cold."

And Ludovic raised the basket and conveyed it into the chamber of the prisoner.

The Count sank overwhelmed upon his bench. For an instant he felt that he himself would crush Picciola with one blow, and so end all; but his

courage failed. Then a ray of hope shot through his mind. "That poor young girl, who has so generously devoted herself to the cause of Picciola, and whose zeal in seeking succor for an unfortunate has met so cruel a reward, may have returned. Perhaps she was admitted to the Emperor. Yes, it is so! Without doubt she has succeeded, and it is that which has irritated the commandant against her. If he has in his hands the order for the liberation of Picciola, why is it delayed? He *must* obey the Emperor's will! Oh! blessings on thee, noble girl! Unfortunate child, separated from thy father, on account of me! Oh, the half of my life, how gladly would I give it for thee, for thy happiness. I would give it only that the door of this prison might be opened to thee!"

CHAPTER VII.

Scarcely half an hour had elapsed, when two civil officers wearing the national scarf, accompanied by the commandant of Fenestrella, presented themselves before Charney, and invited him to ascend to his chamber. When there, the commandant spoke.

He was a corpulent man, with a round, bald head, and thick gray moustache. A scar, from his left eyebrow to his upper-lip, seemed to divide his face in two. A long blue coat, with broad skirts, buttoned to the throat, top-boots over his pantaloons, his hair slightly powdered, curling at the side, spurs to his boots, (without doubt a mark of distinction, for the rheumatism as well as the exigencies of the place made him in fact the first prisoner in the citadel,) — such was the exterior of this personage, whose only weapon was a cane.

Appointed to the custody of political prisoners, most of whom belonged to distinguished families, he prided himself on his fine manners, notwithstanding his frequent loss of temper, and on his fine language, in spite of accustomed grammatical errors. He held himself erect, had a voice strong and emphatic, made many flourishes in saluting, and scratched his forehead when speaking.

With these qualities, Colonel Morand, commandant of Fenestrella, yet passed for a fine specimen of a military man.

From the tone of courtesy with which he addressed him, and the official air of his two companions, Charney believed that they had brought an order of mercy for Picciola.

The commandant wished him to say whether he had ever used him unhandsomely in the exercise of his functions, by want of care, or abuse of power.

This preamble was a good augury. Charney certified all that the commandant desired.

"You know, Monsieur," continued the commandant, "that during your illness all cares were lavished upon you; if it did not please you to submit to the prescriptions of the physicians, it was neither their fault nor mine. I thought that your convalescence would be hastened by the freer use of air and exercise, and almost entire liberty was accorded you to come and go in your court at your pleasure."

Charney thanked him by an inclination of his head, but his impatience showed itself in the compression of his lips.

"Nevertheless, Monsieur," pursued the commandant, in the tone of a man whose feelings have been wounded, and whose consideration has been unappreciated, "you have infringed the laws of the fortress, of which you could not have been in ignorance. You have almost compromised me in my relations with the Governor of Piedmont, General Menou.

and even with the Emperor himself, in causing to be placed before him a petition" —

"Placed before him! he has then received it?" interrupted Charney.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Well?" said the unfortunate man, trembling with hope.

"For this breach of discipline," said the commandant, "you are to be transferred to one of the cells of the old bastion, and to be kept in solitary confinement for one month."

"But as to the petition," cried Charney, endeavoring still to combat the cruel reality which was dispelling his last illusions, — "what did the Emperor say?"

"The Emperor does not trouble himself about such nonsense!" was the disdainful reply.

Charney sank into the only chair with which his chamber was furnished, and from that moment seemed unconscious of all that was passing around him.

"That is not all," said the commandant: "your means of communication known, your relations with the world outside discovered, it is natural to suppose that your correspondence may be more extensive. Have you written to others beside his Majesty?"

The commandant waited in vain for a reply, and resumed in a dryer tone, —

"A visit of inspection has been ordered, and these gentlemen, delegated by the Governor of Turin, will proceed at once to perform the duty in your presence

as the law commands. Before the execution of the order, do you desire to make any revelations? Any such can only act favorably on your case."

The same silence on the part of the prisoner.

The commandant frowned till his bald head was wrinkled to the top, and turning towards the officials, said, "Proceed, Messieurs."

The two then commenced a most vigorous examination, from the chimney to the mattress of the bed, and even the linings of the clothes of the prisoner.

During this time the commandant paced slowly back and forth in the narrow chamber, striking, one by one, with the end of his cane, each plank of the floor, to judge whether it might not cover some secret excavation for the concealment of important papers, or even preparations for an escape. He recalled to mind Latude and others, who had escaped from the Bastile. Three moats, deep and wide, walls ten feet in thickness, gratings, counterscarps, ramparts bristling with cannon, sentinels at every postern and on every parapet, had been of no avail against the perseverance of a man armed with a cord and a nail.

Fenestrella was far from presenting such a girdle of strength and security. Since 1796 only part of the fortifications had been kept in repair, and it was only guarded by a few sentinels outside of the outer walls.

After researches as prolonged as it was possible to make in so small a room, nothing suspicious was found except a little glass bottle containing a black liquid, doubtless the ink of the prisoner.

Interrogated as to the means employed by him to obtain this ink, he turned on his chair towards the window, and commenced drumming on the glass with his fingers, making no reply to the question.

The dressing-case remained to be examined. They demanded the key. He let it fall rather than gave it to them.

Colonel Morand no longer showed the same courtesy of look and manner. He was nearly suffocated with rage. With purple face and flashing eyes, maddened by the confined space of the chamber, he constantly buttoned and unbuttoned his coat, with trembling hands, as if to give vent to the transport of anger which possessed him.

Suddenly, by a spontaneous movement, the two satellites of justice, occupied in taking an inventory of the contents of the dressing-case, holding it in one hand and examining it with the other, came quickly to the window, to bring the full light of day to bear upon it, and, with joyous faces, exclaimed with one voice, "We have it! we have it!"

Then drawing out from under the double bottom a quantity of handkerchiefs covered with fine and close writing, they were sure that they had discovered proofs of a vast conspiracy.

At the sight of the profanation of his precious archives, Charney rose, extended his arm as if to snatch them, opened his mouth; then suddenly calming himself, he again sat down, and remained immovable, without having pronounced a word.

But this first expressive start had sufficed to cause the commandant to attach a high importance to the capture.

By his order the handkerchiefs were at once deposited in a bag, sealed and labelled; the bottle and even the toothpick were confiscated. A report was prepared and Charney requested to sign it, to attest its exactitude. With this request, by a gesture, he refused to comply.

Record is made of this refusal, and his immediate transfer to the cell of the old bastion is ordered.

Ah, how painful, vague, and confused were the thoughts that crowded his brain. But one sentiment of grief overpowered all others in the heart of the stricken man. He had not even given a mocking smile at the triumph of these men in carrying off the record of his observations on his plant, thinking them materials for law proceedings, and proofs of conspiracy. Alas, he was to be forever separated from his *souvenirs!* The lover from whom are taken the letters and the portrait of his adored mistress whom he will never see again, can alone understand the profound anguish of the prisoner. To save Picciola, he had compromised his pride, his honor; he had broken the heart of an old man, and darkened the life of a young girl; and of all which had made life of any value to him nothing remained, not even the lines traced by him recording his sacred studies.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE intercession of Josephine had not then been as effective as it had at first promised to be. After her gentle pleading for the plant and the prisoner, when she placed in Napoleon's hand the handkerchief containing the missive, he recalled the offence to his pride given by the *malapropos* distraction of the Empress during the exhibition of the morning at Marengo, and the signature of Charney increased the disagreeable impression.

"Has the man become insane?" said he; "what comedy does he pretend to play with me? A Jacobin botanist! I shall not be surprised to hear Marat go into ecstasies over the beauties of nature, or to see Couthon present himself at the Convention with a rose in his buttonhole."

Josephine would have raised her voice to object to the title of Jacobin so carelessly given to the Count, but at this moment a chamberlain came to announce to the Emperor that the generals, the ambassadors, as well as the deputies of the Italian provinces, awaited him in the hall of reception. He hastened to join them. When there, inspired more by their presence than by the contents of the petition, he

took occasion, from the name of the petitioner, to break forth with great violence against idealists and philosophers; returning again to the Jacobins, declaring that he knew very well how to subdue and bring them to seek for mercy. And he raised his voice with a tone of menace and resolution, not that he was really as much excited as he wished to make it appear, but, always ready to take advantage of circumstances, he wished that his words should be heard and repeated, especially by the Prussian ambassador present in the assembly. It was his proclamation of his divorce from the principles of the Revolution.

To please the master, each one added something to the speech. The Governor of Turin, above all, Jacques-Abdallah Menou, forgetting, or rather denying his former principles, broke out into violent attacks upon the Brutuses of the clubs and taverns of Italy and France, and there was soon in the imperial circle a unanimous chorus of virulent imprecations against conspirators, revolutionists, and Jacobins, such that Josephine began to tremble before the terrible storm which she had raised.

Recovering somewhat from her alarm, she approached the ear of Napoleon, and in a half laughing tone said, —

"Sire, why all this violence? It is not a matter of Jacobins and revolutionists, but of a poor flower who has never conspired against any one."

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders. "Do you

believe that I am duped by such idle talk?" cried he. "This Charney is a dangerous man, and not a fool. The flower is the pretext; the end, the raising of the stones. It is an escape that he is planning. Menou, see that he is well guarded. And how has he been able to send his petition without its passing through the hand of the commandant? Is this the sort of surveillance that exists in the prisons of state?"

The Empress tried once more to defend her *protégée*.

"Enough, Madame," said the master.

And Josephine, abashed and discouraged, was silenced, and dropped her eyes under the look with which he regarded her.

Menou, vexed by the reprimand of the Emperor, had not been sparing of his reproaches to the commandant of Fenestrella, and he in his turn had hastened to treat with rigor the two prisoners to whom he owed such sharp rebuke.

Girhardi, already separated from his daughter, — who, with a heart full of hope, had only come in sight of the gates of the fortress to be met with an order to quit immediately the territory of Fenestrella, to return there no more, — had that morning been subjected, like Charney, to a domiciliary visit but there had resulted from it nothing that could compromise him.

But emotions more painful than those resulting from the taking away of his manuscript were reserved for the Count.

When, to pass to the cell of the bastion, he descended to the court-yard, following the commandant and his two acolytes, whether Colonel Morand had not noticed it in passing before, or that he wished to be revenged for the obstinate silence of Charney during his visit, his anger seemed to be redoubled at the sight of the slight scaffolding erected around the plant.

"What is all this?" said he to Ludovic. "Is it thus that you watch your prisoners?"

"That, my Colonel," replied he, hesitating, with a sort of groan, with one hand taking his pipe from his mouth and with the other touching his cap with a military salute, "that is the plant, you know — which is so good for the gout and other maladies."

Then, letting his right arm fall to his side, with his left he replaced his pipe in its habitual place.

"Truly," resumed the Colonel, "if these gentlemen were allowed to have their way, the chambers and the courts of the citadel would become gardens, menageries, shops. Come! out of the way with this weed at once, as well as all this rubbish about it!"

Ludovic regarded in turn the plant, Charney, and the commandant; then attempted to murmur some words of justification.

"Be quiet, and obey instantly," cried the Colonel.

Ludovic removed his pipe from his mouth, extinguished it, shook out the ashes, laid it upon a ledge of the wall, and prepared to execute the order. He divested himself of his coat and cap, and rubbed

his hands together as if to gain courage. All at once, as if he acquired new strength from the anger of his chief, he seized and threw away the mattings of braided straw; he tore them to pieces and dispersed them about the court with a sort of rage. Next in turn came the twigs which had served as supports for the matting; these he pulled up one after the other, broke them over his knee, and trod them under his feet. It seemed as if his old affection for Picciola had turned to hate, and that he was wreaking his vengeance upon her.

During this time Charney stood motionless, with his eyes fixed eagerly upon his plant, thus left shelterless, as if with his gaze he would still protect it.

The day had been cool and the sky cloudy. The stem had raised its head somewhat since the day before, and from the withered branches had sprung several little verdant shoots. It seemed as if Picciola were gathering all her strength to die.

What! Picciola, his Picciola! his world of reality and his world of illusions, the pivot on which turned his life, that which irradiated his thoughts, — all to be annihilated! And he, poor captive, the expiation of whose crime Providence had suspended, was to be suddenly arrested in his progress towards true knowledge. How should he henceforth occupy his sad leisure? What will fill the void in his heart? Picciola, the desert hitherto peopled by thee is to become again a desert. No more projects, no more study no more intoxicating dreams, no more observations

to record, nothing more to love! Oh, how narrow will his prison seem! how heavy the air which he will breathe! It will be only a tomb — the tomb of Picciola! This golden branch, this sibylline bough which has had power to exorcise the evil demons with which he was possessed, will be no longer there to defend him against himself. Can he live again his old life of an incredulous philosopher face to face with his bitter thoughts? No! sooner die than enter again into that chilling night from which she has drawn him!

At this moment Charney saw a shadow pass the little grated window. It was the old man.

"Ah," said he to himself, "I have snatched from him his only blessing, I have deprived him of his daughter! Without doubt he comes to curse me, and to rejoice in my torment."

As he glanced up he could see that he was clasping the bars of the window with his feeble hands which trembled with emotion. Charney did not dare to raise his eyes to ask from the bottom of his heart pardon of the only man whose esteem he cared to possess; he feared to see on that noble countenance the justly merited expression of reproach or disdain; and when their eyes did meet, the look of tender compassion with which the poor father (forgetting his own griefs to sympathize with those of his companion in misfortune) regarded him, touched the depth of his heart, and two tears, the only ones that he had ever shed, sprang from his eyes.

These tears were sweet to him, but his pride caused him to dash them quickly away. He would not be suspected of cowardly weakness by the men who surrounded him.

Of all the witnesses of this scene, the two officials alone, indifferent spectators, seemed to understand nothing of the drama which they witnessed. They looked by turns at the prisoner, the old man, the commandant, the jailer, — were astonished at the lively and diverse emotions imprinted on each face, and whisperingly wondered whether some important hiding-place was not concealed underneath this plant so carefully barricaded.

However, the fatal work proceeded. Directed by the Colonel, Ludovic attempted to throw down the supports of the rustic bench; but they resisted his efforts.

"An axe, take an axe," cried the Colonel.

Ludovic took one; it slipped from his hands.

"Finish immediately!" said the Colonel.

At the first blow the seat cracked; at the third it fell to the ground. Then Ludovic bent over the plant standing alone in the midst of the *débris*.

The face of the Count was wan and dejected; the sweat stood in large drops upon his brow.

"Monsieur, Monsieur, why kill it? It will soon die itself," cried he at last, descending again to the character of suppliant.

The Colonel looked at him, smiled ironically, and in his turn made no reply.

"Then," said Charney, with violence, "I will crush it! I will tear it up myself!"

"I forbid you to touch it!" said the commandant, with his harsh voice, extending his cane before Charney as if to place a barrier between the prisoner and his darling. Then, in obedience to an imperative order from him, Ludovic seized Picciola with his two hands, and was about to uproot it from the earth.

The Count, struck dumb with grief, stood gazing at it.

At the base of the stem, near the lowest branches, where the sap still flowed, a little blossom, fresh and brilliant, was just opening. Already the others hung drooping upon their withered stems. This one alone still had life; it alone was not wounded, crushed, stifled, by the grasp of the large, rough hands of the jailer. The corolla, slightly shaded by a few leaves, was turned towards Charney. He fancied that its perfume was exhaled towards him, and, through eyes dim with gathering tears, he seemed to see it bud, expand, and die. The man and the plant exchanged a last farewell look.

If at this moment, when so many passions and interests were centred in a humble plant, strangers had suddenly entered that prison-court, where the heavens shed only a sombre and dim light, would they not have judged from the picture that met their view, — these emissaries of justice with their tricolored scarfs, this military chief issuing his pitiless orders, — that they were witnessing some secret

and bloody execution,— that Ludovic was the executioner, and Charney the criminal to whom his sentence had just been read? And is it not so? They come! these strangers enter! Behold them!

One is an aid-de-camp of General Menou; the other, a page of the Empress. The dust with which they are covered shows with what haste they have travelled.

They came but just in time.

At the noise which announced their entrance, Ludovic relaxed his grasp of Picciola, raised his head and he and Charney, both with pale faces, gazed at each other.

The aid-de-camp delivered to Colonel Morand an order from the Governor of Turin; the Colonel read it, and with a hesitating movement took two or three turns in the court-yard, striking his cane on the ground, — compared the missive which he had just received with that of the day before, — then at last, after raising his eyebrows again and again in token of great astonishment, he put on a semi-courteous air, approached Charney, and graciously gave into his hands the letter of the General.

The prisoner read aloud what follows: —

"His Majesty the Emperor and King has transmitted to me the order, Monsieur the Commandant to inform you that he consents to the request of Monsieur Charney relative to the plant which is growing between the pavements of the prison-court

Those which incommode it must be raised. I charge you to see to the execution of this order, and to consult upon the subject with Monsieur Charney."

"*Vive l'empereur!*" cried Ludovic.

"*Vive l'empereur!*" murmured another voice which seemed to issue from the wall.

During the reading, the commandant stood leaning upon his cane; the two men of the scarfs, unable to find the key to all this, seemed confounded, and sought in their own minds some connection between these events and the conspiracy which they had imagined. The aid-de-camp and the page wondered why such haste had been necessary. At last the page, addressing himself to Charney, said, "There is a postscript from the Empress."

And Charney read on the margin: —

"I recommend Monsieur Charney to the kind care of Colonel Morand. I shall be particularly obliged to him for all that he can do to alleviate the condition of his prisoner. Signed: JOSEPHINE."

"*Vive l'impératrice!*" cried Ludovic.

Charney kissed the signature, and held the paper several minutes before his eyes.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE commandant of Fenestrella resumed all his courtesy towards the *protégé* of her Majesty the Empress and Queen. Not only was Charney not removed to the cell of the bastion, but he was allowed to reconstruct all the frames for sheltering Picciola, who now, languishing from her semi-transplanting, more than ever needed them.

Colonel Morand had so well calmed his rage against the man and the plant, that every morning Ludovic was sent with a message from him, asking if Charney desired anything, and inquiring after the health of Picciola.

Taking advantage of this good-will, Charney obtained from his munificence pens, ink, and paper, in order to record anew from memory his studies and observations on vegetable physiology; for the letter of the Governor of Turin did not annul the right of search and seizure. The two emissaries of justice had carried away his archives on cambric, and after a profound examination, declaring that they were unable, notwithstanding their efforts, to find the key

of this correspondence, they had dispatched it all to Paris, to the minister of police, there to be studied, analyzed, deciphered by experts.

But a far more important privation, a loss which he could not supply, was imposed upon Charney.

The commandant, revenging upon Girhardi the reproaches of General Menou concerning his careless surveillance, had banished him to another part of the fortress. This separation, which threw the old man into complete isolation, weighed upon the heart of Charney with bitter self-condemnation, and nullified the effect of the favors of the Colonel to himself.

He passed a great part of the day with his eyes fixed upon the grating and the closed window. In imagination he again beheld the good old man at the moment when with great effort he pressed his arm through the lower bars, vainly endeavoring to touch a friendly hand; he saw his petition to the Emperor grazing the wall, as, tied to the end of a cord, it mounted to that window, from him to Girhardi, from Girhardi to Theresa, from Theresa to the Empress; and behind these bars again shone forth the look of pity and pardon which had so lately come to him with such sustaining power in the midst of his anguish; and he heard the cry of joy burst from a broken heart when the message of mercy to Picciola had at last come.

It is to him, to them, that he owes that mercy, and for that mad attempt which could only benefit him

they alone had been punished, — cruelly punished Poor father! poor daughter!

In imagination he often saw her again in the same place where he had seen her for one moment on his awaking from that painful dream which to him predicted the death of his plant. On that day, in the confusion of his thoughts, he had seemed to recognize in her all the features of the Picciola of his dreams and it is thus that he now pictures her.

As the prisoner was nourishing these sweet visions with his eyes turned to the former residence of Girhardi, something stirred behind the dim and dusty glass; the little window was opened, — a woman appeared at the grating. Her skin was brown and swarthy; she had an enormous goitre, and evil, avaricious eyes. It was the wife of Ludovic.

From that time Charney saw no more bright visions in looking at the little window.

CHAPTER II.

Freed from her fetters, surrounded by good earth, with a large frame of pavement, Picciola repaired her disasters, raised her head again, and came out triumphant from all her tribulations. Nevertheless she had lost her flowers, with the exception of the last little blossom which had opened at the base of the stem.

In the swelling seed which ripened in the calyx, Charney foresaw new and sublime discoveries. For now there could be full development; there was more than enough earth for Picciola. She might become a mother, and see her children grow up under her shadow.

In watching it, he was seized with a desire to know the true name of this companion with whom he had passed such happy hours.

"What! shall I not give to Picciola, the poor foundling, the name with which science or custom has dowered her beforehand, in common with her sisters of the mountains and plains?"

The next time the commandant visited him, Charney spoke to him of his desire to possess a work on botany. Without refusing his demand, the Colonel, wishing to screen himself from responsibility, referred

the matter to the Governor of Piedmont. Menou hastened, not only to send him one work upon the subject, but dispatched an enormous pile of volumes from the library of Turin, to aid the prisoner in his researches, — "hoping," wrote he, "that her Majesty the Empress and Queen, well versed herself in this sort of knowledge, as in many others, would not be displeased to know the name of that flower in which she had shown such a lively interest."

At the sight of this mass of science, which Ludovic, bending under the weight of the burden, brought to him, Charney smiled.

"Is there then need of such heavy artillery," said he, "to induce my flower to give me her name?"

Nevertheless, it was with a sentiment of real pleasure that he once more held a book in his hand. He turned over the leaves with that thrill of curiosity which in old times he had felt when the mysteries of science were his chief interest. The only knowledge that he desired and coveted now was concerning flowers, the knowledge of Nature in her most lovely expression of herself.

"If ever I am released from this prison," said he to himself, "I will be a botanist. There, no more scholastic controversies, and pedantries, which mislead instead of enlightening. Nature must show herself always the same to her disciples, always true though changing, always beautiful though unadorned."

And he interrogated the newly arrived volumes

asking them also their names and titles. There were the "Species Plantarum" of Linnæus, the "Institutiones rei herbariæ" of Tournefort, the "Theatrum Botanicum" of Bauhin, the "Phytograpiha," the "Dendrologia," the "Agrostographia" of Plukenet, of Aldrovande, and of Scheuchzer; besides many others, both French and Italian.

Although somewhat dismayed at this formidable mass of science, Charney was not discouraged, and, as a preparation for his premeditated researches, he opened first the smallest of the volumes to look at the index, to see how great a variety of denominations a vegetable could bear.

He would have liked to choose in this floral calendar between Alcea, Alisima, Andryala, Bromelia, Celosia, Coronilla, Euphrasia, Helvella, Passiflora, Primula, Santolina, or other names sweet to the lips, harmonious to the ear.

All at once the fear presented itself that his plant might bear a harsh and ungraceful name, a name with a masculine or neuter termination, which would be at variance with all his ideas concerning his little friend and companion.

What would become of the young girl of his dreams if he was obliged to apply to her such a designation as Hydrocharis, or Satyrium, or Gossypium, Cynoglossum, or Cucubalus, Cenchrus, Ruscus! or even some common name more barbarous still, as Rest-ox, Fly-trap, Sow-bread, Poor-man's-herb, Crane's-bill, Dog's-tooth, Hare's-ear, Fox's-tail, Snap

dragon, Goat's-beard, or Hart's-tongue? Would it not be enough to disenchant him forever? No, he would not risk such a trial.

Spite of himself, however, he took up in turn each volume, turned over the leaves, and went into ecstasies over the innumerable marvels of nature, but was irritated by the love of system in men, which had made of that study, heretofore so attractive to him, the hardest, most technical, most involved of the sciences.

For eight days he devoted himself to the analysis of his plant, in order to learn her name, but without success.

In this chaos of strange words, tossed from one system to another, bewildered in the midst of this vast and ponderous synonymy, — a veritable iron network covering the science of botany as if to hide its charms, and weighing upon it almost to the point of suffocation, — in vain he consulted all the authors, one after the other, descending from class to order, from order to genus, from genus to species, from species to variety, constantly losing the trace, and ending by cursing his unfaithful guides always at variance with each other, not only concerning the general nomenclature, but sometimes also as to the name and functions of each organ of the plant.

In the midst of his investigations, a thousand times repeated, the little flower, the only flower, interrogated petal by petal, examined even to the depth of its calyx, suddenly became detached under the hand

of the analyzer, the dissector, and fell, carrying with it all projects for the study of the seed and all hope of fructification.

Charney, filled with dismay, stood for a time speechless; then apostrophizing with an agitated voice and a wrathful look the volumes which lay open upon his knees and around him, —

"Why did I ever think of consulting you?" cried he. "She shall be called Picciola! nothing but Picciola, the prisoner's plant, his *consolatrice*, his friend. What need has she of another name, and why do I wish to know any other? Fool that I am! is there no remedy for this thirst for knowledge? Can one never be cured of it?"

And following an angry impulse, he seized the books one after the other and dashed them to the ground. A bit of paper fell from the leaves of one of them and fluttered into the court. Charney picked it up and found that it contained these few words, recently written and in the handwriting of a woman: —

"Hope, and tell your neighbor to hope, for I do not forget either of you."

CHAPTER III.

Charney read and re-read twenty times this note of which the meaning could not be doubtful; for among women, one only had been for him all heart, all devotion: and that woman he had scarcely seen; he did not know the sound of her voice; and if suddenly she should stand before him, he would not recognize her. But by what means had she been able to elude the vigilance of his Arguses and get this letter to his hands? "Tell your neighbor to hope!" Poor daughter, who dared not name her father! Poor father, to whom he could not even show this *souvenir* of his daughter!

In thinking of this good old man, whose burden of sorrow he had been the means of making so heavy, and whose pain he was not permitted to assuage, Charney was broken-hearted with regret, and in his sleepless nights the image of the unhappy Girhardi was ever before him.

During one of these nights an unusual noise was heard in the chamber above his, which had till then been unoccupied; this filled his mind with conjectures, each one more strange than the other.

In the morning, Ludovic entered his chamber with

an air of business, and although he endeavored to compose his countenance with discretion, his eyes, sparkling and animated, announced some great news.

"What is the matter?" said Charney to him, "and what happened last night in the room above?"

"Oh, nothing, Signor Count, nothing, except that there arrived yesterday several new prisoners, and the chambers which have been vacant will now be occupied. Yes," pursued he, with an affected tone of consideration, "it will be necessary for you to share the enjoyment of your court-yard with a companion in captivity; but do not be troubled, we receive here only good honest men: (when I say honest men, I mean there are no thieves among them.) But here comes the new man, to make you his installation visit."

At this unexpected announcement, Charney rose, filled with surprise, but hardly knowing whether to be pleased or annoyed by this change, when he looked up and saw at the door of his room Girhardi!

Without a word they sprang to meet each other; their clasped hands bore witness to their joy, and through their eyes their souls met.

"Well, well," said Ludovic, laughing, "I see that the acquaintance will be soon made;" and he went out, leaving the two together in a transport of delight.

After this moment of most expressive silence, "Who, then, has reunited us?" said Charney.

"It is my daughter, I cannot doubt it. How can

I be mistaken? All the happiness that has come to me in my life has been through her."

Charney bowed his head with a confused air, and his hands pressed again those of the old man. Then drawing from his dressing-case a little paper, he presented it to him, saying, "Do you know this hand writing?"

"It is hers!" cried Girhardi; "it is the writing of my daughter, of my Theresa! No, she has not forgotten us, and there has been no delay in the fulfilment of her promise, since we are now reunited. But how did you receive this?"

Charney told him, — and then, without thinking, made a movement as if to take possession of it again; but seeing Girhardi hold it with hands trembling from emotion, reading it slowly word by word, letter by letter, kissing it a hundred times, he felt that it no longer belonged to him, and with the thought came a sharp pang of regret which he could not explain to himself.

After the first moments, in which they talked of Theresa, with all possible conjectures as to her fate and the place where she might be, Girhardi, looking with a sentiment of curiosity about the chamber of his host, stopped before each of the inscriptions on the wall.

The modification of two of them by added words, the new-comer had no doubt was owing to the influence of the plant, and he could easily appreciate the importance of the part it had played in its effect upon the prisoner.

One of the sentences contained these words: —

"Mankind are on the earth, as they will hereafter be under it, — side by side, but without any bond of union. For the body, the world is a populous arena, where one is jostled on all sides; for the heart, it is a solitary desert."

Girhardi took a bit of charcoal and added, —

"If one has not a friend!"

Then turning gently to his companion, he opened to him his arms.

Still under the influence of the thoughts which had stirred his inmost soul, with palpitating heart and moistened eyes, Charney threw himself upon the offered breast, and the two sealed the holy pact of friendship by a long and earnest embrace.

The next day they breakfasted together *tête-à-tête* in Charney's room, one seated on the bed, the other on the chair, having between them the little carved table, upon which, beside the double ration of the prison, was a fine lake-trout, lobsters from the Cenise, a bottle of excellent Mondovi wine, and an appetizing morsel of Milesian cheese, known throughout Italy under the name of *rubiola*. This was a feast for captives! But Girhardi did not lack money, nor the commandant complaisance, since his new orders.

Their conversation was full of confidence and sweetness.

Charney had never so enjoyed the pleasures of the table never had repast seemed to him so deli

cious. If exercise and the waters of Eurotas served as seasoning to the black broth of the Spartans, the presence and conversation of a friend adds still more to the flavor of the most simple dishes.

Confidences naturally followed. The two already loved each other so well, though knowing each other so slightly. Without questions, without hesitations, without preamble, simply as the fulfilment of the contract of friendship entered into the day before, Charney recounted his pride and self-satisfaction in his studies, and the ridiculously vain folly of his youth. The old man then spoke, and confessed also the errors of his early life.

CHAPTER IV.

Girhardi was born in Turin, where his father possessed extensive works for the manufacture of arms.

Through Piedmont, ideas, as well as merchandise, had always passed from France to Italy, and from Italy to France. Of the one, as of the other, some remained by the way. The breath of France had blown upon his father: he was a philosopher, a disciple of Voltaire, a reformist. The breath of Italy had blown upon his mother: she was a *dévote* to excess. As to him, poor child, — loving, respecting, listening to them both with the same confidence, — he necessarily partook of the two natures. Republican, *dévot*, he dreamed of the united reign of religion and liberty, — a charming alliance, without doubt, but to be arranged according to his ideas; and he was twenty. *Then*, one was young at twenty years.

He hastened to pledge himself to both parties.

At that time the Piedmontese nobility enjoyed certain privileges humiliating to other classes of society. They alone, for example, could occupy a box at the theatre, and — would one believe it? —

dance at a public ball! for the dance was held to be an aristocratic exercise, and the common people were only allowed to be present as spectators.

At the head of a band of young men of the people, Giacomo Girhardi one day openly braved this singular privilege. He boldly formed a plebeian quadrille in the midst of the quadrilles of the nobles. The patrician dancers were indignant; the plebeian dancers and spectators raised vociferous cries in claiming the dance for all. To that seditious clamor, other cries of "liberty" succeeded; and in the tumult which followed, after twenty challenges offered and refused, not from cowardice but from pride, the imprudent Girhardi, carried away by the ardor of his youth and his ideas, struck a blow upon the cheek of one of the proudest and most nighly titled of his adversaries.

The insult was serious. The powerful family of San Marsano swore to be avenged; the chevaliers of Saint Maurice, even those of the Annunciade, in short, all the nobility of the country, who, in their peril, became one body — each one felt himself insulted in his own proper person.

By the order of his father, Giacomo took refuge with one of his relatives, vicar of a small village in the principality of Masserano, in the environs of Bielle. But notwithstanding his flight, he was condemned, for contumacy, to five years exile from Turin.

The unwise importance given to the affair, which was called "the dancing conspiracy," made a here

of Giacomo in the eyes of his companions. Some regarded him as the avenger of the people; others, as one of those dangerous innovators who dream of a universal republic; and while at court the giver of blows was denounced as one of the most active members of the democratic party, the poor young factionist was quietly aiding the vicar in his parish duties, a constant attendant at church, and a devout communicant.

This troubled commencement of a life which promised to flow so calmly, influenced for a long time the fate of Giacomo Girhardi. The old man paid dearly for the follies of the young man, for upon his arrest for his pretended crime against the First Consul, his accusers did not fail to lay great stress upon the judgment which had long ago been passed upon him as a disturber of the peace and an ungovernable republican.

From the time of his leaving Turin, and during his exile, that love of equality which he had received from his father was extinguished within him, and the religious sentiments which he inherited from his mother developed more and more.

He soon carried them to excess; and his relative, the good and worthy ecclesiastic, whose intentions were excellent, but whose views were perhaps somewhat contracted, instead of trying to calm his enthusiasm, excited and encouraged it, hoping to make for him of Christian humility a buckler against the impetuosity of his character. Later he saw how unwise his course had been.

Giacomo had but one desire, made but one vow, — to be a priest.

To ward off this blow, which would deprive them of their only son, his father and mother withdrew him from the tutelage of the vicar, and taking advantage of his affection for them, they persuaded, or rather constrained him by supplications and tears, to marry.

Giacomo married; but his marriage resulted very differently from their expectations. His wife was young and beautiful, and he inspired her with the most tender affection. He used his influence over her heart, and all the power of his impassioned eloquence, not to set before her the joys of home, but the delights of a religious life. He succeeded completely — so well, that his young wife retired to a convent, and he returned to the environs of Bielle.

At a short distance from the village rose a chain of mountains, the last spur of the Pennine Alps. At the base of Mount Mucrone, the most elevated of these mountains, was a little valley, sombre and dark, enveloped in mist, bristling with rocks, bordered by precipices seeming from a distance to answer to Dante's description of the mouth of hell. But as one approached nearer, the rocks showed themselves decked with verdure pleasing to the sight; the precipices were declivities with gentle slopes, where flowering shrubs formed a ladder of vegetation; the little hills were covered with natural thickets; the mists, changing in hue with the rays

of the sun, by turns white, rose-colored, violet, at last wholly disappeared. Then one perceived, at the bottom of the lovely valley, a lake five hundred feet wide, fed by springs, and from which sprang, with murmuring music, the little river of Oroppa, which, after flowing a short distance, encircles one of the hills of the chain at the summit of which is a church erected at great cost, and dedicated by the piety of the people to the Virgin Mary. This church is the most celebrated in the country.

If we believe the legend, Saint Eusebius, on his return from Syria, deposited in this isolated place the statue in wood of the Virgin, carved by Saint Luke the Evangelist, that it might be preserved from the profanations of the Arians.

In this little valley, on the point of these rocks, on the slopes of these precipices, on the banks of this lake and this river, on this mountain, in this church, at the foot of this statue, Giacomo Girhardi passed five years of his life, forgetting the whole world, his friends, his family, his wife, his mother, for the Virgin of Oroppa!

Not knowing that credulity is not faith, that superstition leads to idolatry, that all excess alienates from God, it was not the heavenly Mary, the mother of Christ, that he adored, but *his* image of the Virgin, the virgin of the mountain. His days and nights passed in prayer and tears at the feet of this image, repenting of imaginary sins. In vain the good vicar, alarmed by this fanatical enthusiasm, sought to bring

him to reason—everything was useless. In order to divert his mind from this ardent and dangerous preoccupation, he proposed that he should visit other places dedicated to the Virgin: but what to him were Our Lady of Loretto, or Saint Mary of Bologne or of Milan? What he adored was that particular block of wood, black and worm-eaten, and not the holy mother there so unworthily represented.

What this sentiment lost in depth, it gained in breadth. The Virgin of Oroppa was surrounded by a retinue of saints. Giacomo had invested these with all celestial power, all the attributes of the Deity. One he asked to dissipate the clouds charged with hail, which from the heights of Mount Mucrone sometimes descended upon the valley; another, to soften the regrets of his mother, or sustain his wife in her trials; one was to watch over his sleep, an other to defend him from the tempter; and so on. His devotion became an impure polytheism, and his mountain of Oroppa an Olympus where God alone had no place.

Imposing upon himself the harshest penance and privations, he fasted, lacerated himself, remained sometimes three days without nourishment; and the physical exhaustion which ensued was honored by him with the name of spiritual exaltation. He had visions and revelations. He believed with certain Quietists that by subduing his material nature he could make his soul visible. He destroyed his health and lost his reason.

One day he heard a voice from on high ordering him to undertake the conversion of the heretic Vaudois, a remnant of whom still existed not far from him in the Valais. He immediately started, passing through the country watered by the Sesia, and reached the summit of the Alps on the side of Mount Rosa; but, suddenly overtaken by the blocking snows of winter, in the midst of a company of herdsmen, it became necessary for him to pass several months under shelter of the roof of a large *chalet*.

This *chalet*, called "the Stables," was an oblong square five hundred feet long, open only to the south, made impervious to the air on every other side by strong planks of pine, filled in with mosses and lichens cemented by gums and resin. Here, in the rigorous season, men, women, and children, with the flocks they tended, all dwelt, under the sceptre of the oldest man of the tribe. In the centre of the dwelling was a large hearth constantly supplied with fuel, over which hung an immense caldron, in which were cooked, alternately and sometimes together, for the community, dried vegetables, bacon, mutton, quarters of the chamois, and the flesh of the Alpine marmot; which was accompanied, during the repast, by bread made of chestnuts, and for wine a sourish fermented liquor made from whortleberries and a mountain grape.

Here, varied occupations — the care of the flocks and the children, the preparation of cheeses, spinning the hemp, making farming implements, (with

which in the short summer of this climate to induce the thin soil of the rocks to be productive,) the garments of sheep-skin, the baskets of bark, little fancy articles carved in sycamore or larch wood, to be sold in the towns — kept busy all the inhabitants of the *chalet*, an industrious and cheerful population, who mingled their songs and laughter with the sound of the axe, the wheel, and the hammer. There, labor seemed sweet; study and prayer were looked upon as a duty and pleasure. They sang pious hymns with well-trained and melodious voices; the older instructed the younger in reading and arithmetic, the most apt in music, and even a little Latin; for the civilization of the high Alps, like its vegetation, seems to be preserved under the snow, at least among this tribe; and it is not uncommon to see in the early spring schoolmasters and minstrels descend from these *chalets*, imparting instruction and pleasure to those in the valleys.

The hosts of Giacomo were Vaudois. The circumstances seemed favorable for his plans of conversion, but at the first word upon the subject of his mission, the chief of the family, an old man of eighty years, (less respected for his years than for the virtues and good works which had marked each day of his life,) imposed silence.

"Our fathers," said he to him, "endured exile, dispersion, even death, rather than consent to the worship of images; hope not then to bring about tha in us which ages of persecution failed to accomplish

in them. Stranger, you are forced to dwell for a time under our roof; pray in your manner, we will pray in ours; but unite your efforts to ours in a common labor, for here, shut out from the stir and diversions of the world, idleness will kill you. Be our companion, our brother, as long as the snows imprison us. When the roads are open, you may quit us, if it pleases you, without blessing the hearth that has warmed you, without even turning back with a gesture of farewell to those who have lodged and nourished you. You will owe us nothing, for you will have worked with us; and if the balance should be on our side, God will pay us."

Obliged to submit, Giacomo lived five months the companion of these honest men. During five months he witnessed their virtues; for five months, morning and evening, he heard the prayers which they addressed to God alone. His mind, no longer excited by the sight of the objects of his exclusive worship, became calm; and when the prison-doors that the ice had closed were opened by the sun, at the aspect of the sun and nature in her magnificent expression of herself in these Alpine heights, the idea of the eternal and all-powerful Creator entered his heart with vivid power, and there resumed its rightful throne.

The arrival of the first birds, the sight of the first plants, springing already in bud from beneath the snow, the hum of swarms of bees, all excited in him transports of joy and love.

An entire volume would not suffice to paint the innumerable and varied sensations through which Giacomo passed. During his sojourn at the "Stables" the good old chief had formed a strong affection for him; he knew little of books, but he had joined his own observations to those his fathers had taught him, and he delighted to explain the Creator by the creation. From this asylum which he had entered, his brain filled with ideas of intolerance and fanaticism, the converter came out himself converted. The habit of labor, the sight of the family, turned the thoughts of Giacomo to the duties which remained for him to fulfil.

Girhardi hastened to the convent of his wife.

A complete romance might be written in recounting the means which he employed to reconquer the heart which he had once repulsed.

But, to be brief, after unheard-of efforts to wrest his wife from the cloistral life, to undo himself the effects of his former teachings, Giacomo Girhardi, restored to reason, to happiness, to true faith, became the best of husbands, and, after a few years, the happiest of fathers.

Twenty-five years of wisdom and virtue redeemed his errors.

After his return to Turin, in the midst of his own friends, he established by his industry a business worthy of him. He possessed a considerable fortune, which his labor would have augmented still more, had not his benevolence formed a channel

through which his wealth flowed away. To do good was so sweet to him! The love of his fellow-men filled his heart with joy, and the study of nature added an inexhaustible charm to his life.

Animated nature excited his most curious investigations; and as God is great even in the most minute of his works, the religious philosopher chose insects for his study, in preference to any other works of the sublime Artificer.

By reason of this interest, during his days of captivity, Ludovic had given him the singular cognomen of "the fly-catcher."

CHAPTER V.

The two captives had no secrets from each other After having rapidly recounted to each other the principal events of their lives, they went over them again in detail, to tell each other of the various emotions to which the events had given rise.

They spoke also of Theresa; but at this name Charney felt the blood mount to his cheek, and the old man himself became pensive; a moment of silence, sad and solemn, always followed the name of the absent angel.

More commonly their recitals were interrupted by some grave discussion on a point of morals, or by observations on the eccentricities of human nature. Girhardi's mild and benevolent philosophy made happiness consist in the love of one's neighbor; and Charney, sometimes disagreeing with him could not understand how this indulgence and tenderness for men could be retained, notwithstanding the injustice and persecutions that the virtuous Piedmontese had suffered at their hands.

"But," said he to Girhardi, "did you not curse these men, when, after having basely calumniated

you, they deprived you of your liberty and the sight of — your child?"

"Ought the fault of the few to fall upon all? Even those who injured me, who knows? — deceived by appearances, blinded by political fanaticism, perhaps they did it in good faith! Believe me, my friend, we must think of the evil that has been done us, with the idea of pardon at the bottom of the heart. Which of us does not need it for himself? Which of us has not mistaken error for truth? The apostle John has said that God is love. Oh! how beautiful and true is that saying! Yes, it is in loving that one rises nearer to God, and receives strength from Him to bear misfortune. If I had entered my prison with thoughts of hatred against humanity, I should without doubt have died of despair! but no, God be praised, such painful sentiments were far from me. The recollection of so many friends remaining faithful in my misfortunes, of so many hearts which suffered in my suffering, strengthened my love to mankind, and the most trying feature of my captivity was that the sight of a human being was forbidden me."

"What!" said Charney, "was your treatment so harsh and rigorous?"

"When I was first arrested," continued his friend, I was carried to the citadel of Turin and placed in a solitary dungeon, where even my jailer could not communicate with me. My food was conveyed to me by means of a revolving box, and during one

long month nothing came to interrupt that mute solitude. One must know what I then experienced to comprehend how certainly, notwithstanding the reveries of our philosophers, the state of society is the natural state of the human race, and what horrors are endured by the unfortunate one condemned to isolation. Not to see a man! to live without a glance from other eyes, without a voice to strike the ear, without touching another hand! not to be able to rest the brow, the breast, the heart, but on cold and insensible objects! It is frightful! and the strongest reason must succumb. One month, one eternal month passed by thus for me. The month had hardly commenced when the sound of the step of my jailer, as he came every other day to renew my food, caused me inexpressible joy. I watched for the moment with anxiety. I always called good-day to him through the iron door which separated us, but he never answered me. I strove during the rotation of the box to catch a glimpse of his face, his hand, even his dress; I could never succeed. Had his countenance been marked by cruelty and vice, I should have found it beautiful. Had he extended his arm to me even to repulse me, I would have blessed him; but nothing! nothing! I only saw him the day of my transfer to Fenestrella.

"I had then for sole diversion, for my only pleasure, my only companions, spiders, which I watched for hours. I made of them friends by crumbling my bread for them. Rats were not wanting in my dun-

geon, but these animals had always roused in me an invincible aversion. Nevertheless I fed them, although defending myself from their approach and contact. The care which I took of my spiders, even the terror with which my poor ugly rats inspired me, did not serve to divert my mind, and despair took possession of me in thinking of my daughter."

Charney started at the name. Girhardi understood what was passing in his mind, and hastened to continue, resuming an air of serenity.

"But a piece of good fortune soon came to me. The light penetrated into my gallery by a window strongly barred by a cross of iron, (and it was before this cross of my prison that I said my morning and evening prayers;) a shed was in front of this window, so that I could only see a portion of a wall that seemed to connect two bastions. Above me was the donjon of the citadel. One day — merciful Providence, how I thanked thee for it! — the shadow of a man was cast on the part of the wall which I could see. The man I could not see, but I conjectured his movements by those of his shadow. That shadow came and went; it was that of a soldier recently put as sentinel on the platform of the donjon. I could distinguish the shape of his coat, his epaulets, the projection of his cartridge-box, the point of his bayonet, the waving of his feather. How can I tell you, my friend, of the joy that filled my heart? I was no longer alone: a companion had come to me The next day, and the following days, the shadow of

the soldier again appeared upon the wall; his shadow or that of another. But it was always a man, one of my kind, who moved, who lived, there, almost under my eyes! I watched, I followed the alternate coming and going of the shadow; I made myself one with it by marching the length of my gallery as it marched, turning when it turned. When the sentinel was relieved, I said adieu to the departing one, and good-day to the new-comer whose turn of duty it was. I knew the corporal; I distinguished soon all my military guardians by their outline. Shall I confess it? for some I formed an inexplicable preference. From their attitude, their gait, the quickness or slowness of their motions, I formed conjectures as to their age, their character, their sentiments. One hastened his steps, changed his gun quickly from hand to hand, or kept time with the motion of his head as if humming an air; without doubt he was young and of a lively disposition, and while singing dreamed of love. Another passed with bent brow, stopped sometimes, resting his two arms on his gun for some moments in an attitude of melancholy; he thought doubtless of his absent mother, of his native village, of all that he had left behind him. He lifted his hand to his face, perhaps to brush away a tear. For some of these dear shadows I felt a true affection; I was interested in their fate, I formed wishes for them, I prayed for them. New tendernesses were born in my heart, and consoled it. Believe me, my friend, we must love our fellow-men only through that comes happiness."

"Excellent man," said Charney, deeply moved, "who would not love you? Why did I not know you sooner? How different my life would have been. But ought I to complain? Have I not found here what the world never gave me, — a devoted heart, a strong support, virtue, truth, you and Picciola?"

For amid all these confidences, Picciola was not forgotten. The two friends constructed together near her a seat larger and more comfortable than the first. Here, seated side by side, and with Picciola in front of them, they felt that they were a company of three. They called this seat the bench of conference. It was there that the simple modest man was eloquent in order to be persuasive, was persuasive in order to be useful; and in him the gift of natural eloquence and the power of persuasion were not wanting. This bench was at the same time the scholar's bench and the teacher's desk; there sat side by side the professor and the pupil, — the professor was he who knew the least, but knew the best; the professor was Girhardi, — the pupil, Charney, — the book, Picciola.

CHAPTER VI.

They were seated in their accustomed place. The autumn approached, and Charney, losing all hope of the reflowering of his plant, talked with his friend of his regret for the fall of the last flower. Girhardi, to supply to him the loss of his observations upon the seed, unfolded to him many of the wonders concerning the fructification of plants.

There, as elsewhere, the imprint of a divine hand was seen in all the acts of Nature. Girhardi recounted how the seeds of many plants, whose large leaves and close foliage would prevent their dispersion, were provided with a feathery tuft, so that the wind might more easily waft them away; how others, enclosed in an elastic pod, which bursts with a sudden spring at the moment of their maturity, were thus thrown to a distance. These plumes and springs are feet and wings which God has given them, that each one may choose his place, and germinate in the warmth of the sun.

What eye can follow in their rapid flight through the air the membranous seed of the elm, the maple the pine, the ash, circling in the atmosphere amic

myriads of other seeds, floating with their own buoyancy, and seeming to hasten to meet the birds whose hunger they are to appease?

The old man explained also how aquatic plants destined to ornament the banks of streams, or deck the borders of lakes, are endowed with a form which enables them to float upon the water, that they may thus be planted upon the edges of the banks, or pass from one side of the stream to the other; how, when their weight compels them to sink, it is because they will best grow in the bed of the stream, or in the mud of the morass; how others without seeds multiply themselves by their roots, by their offshoots reproducing themselves like polyps, and thus put to use the superabundance of life which animates them; thus the rushes and reeds spring like an army of lances from the bosom of stagnant waters, and those beautiful water-lilies, who with feet in the mud beneath, spread upon the surface of the water their large glossy leaves, and their snowy white or golden blossoms.

"These wonders exist," exclaimed Charney, "and so few deign to observe them!"

This was one of the lessons of the old man.

"My friend," said Charney one day to his companion, as they were seated together on the bench of conference, "can the insects which you have made your favorite subject of study, offer you as many marvels to observe as my Picciola to me?"

"Quite as many," replied the professor. "Believe

me, you will not thoroughly appreciate your Picciola until you have made acquaintance with the little animated beings who come sometimes to visit her and hover and buzz about her. Then you will see the many affinities, the secret laws which bind the insect to the plant, as the insect and the plant to the rest of creation; for all springs from one will, all is governed by one intelligence. From this unity of design arises that harmony, that general accord, which we cannot apprehend in its vast whole, but which nevertheless exists."

Girhardi was proceeding to develop his thought, when suddenly pausing, his eyes fixed upon Picciola, he kept silence for several minutes.

"Of what are you thinking, my friend?" said Charney.

"I think," replied the professor, "that Picciola is going to aid me in answering the question you asked me just now. Look at this butterfly; while I speak, it forces your plant to contract an engagement with it. Yes, for it has deposited its hope of posterity in the keeping of one of her branches."

Charney bent down to verify the fact. The butterfly flew away after having covered its eggs with a gum which fastened them firmly to the stem of the plant.

"Well," said Girhardi, "do you think it is by chance or at random that it has thus come to give in charge to Picciola this precious deposit? Believe it not! Nature has assigned to each species of plant a

species of insect. Every plant has his guest to lodge and nourish. Now consider how wonderful is the action of this butterfly. It was first a caterpillar when a caterpillar, it was nourished by a plant like this; afterwards it underwent many transformations as a butterfly, faithless to its first love, it has flown from flower to flower, gathering sweets from each. When the moment of maternity is come to her, who never knew her mother and will never see her children, (for her work is accomplished, and she is about to die,) — to her whom experience has taught nothing, — she comes to confide her eggs to a plant like that which has nourished her in another form and in another season. It knows that little caterpillars will come from these eggs, and for them it has forgotten its own vagrant habits as a butterfly. Who then has taught it this? who has given it memory, reason, and the ability to recognize this plant, the foliage of which differs to-day from what it was in the spring? Practised eyes are mistaken sometimes; but the insect never!"

Charney expressed his astonishment.

"That is not all," interrupted Girhardi; "examine now the branch chosen by him; it is one of the oldest and strongest, for the new shoots, feeble and tender, might be frozen and destroyed by the winter's cold, or broken by the wind, — this it knows also; — once more, who has taught it?"

"But," said Charney, "pardon me my friend, are you not deluding yourself by some preconceived opinion or system?"

"Silence, sceptic!" cried the old man, with one of his meaning smiles. "Perhaps you will believe that which you see. Listen to me. Picciola will play her part in her turn. It is no longer a question of the foresight of the insect, but of that of Nature, of one of those laws of harmony of which I spoke to you, which forces the plant to accept the legacy of the butterfly. Next spring we can together verify the prodigy," said he, repressing a sigh addressed to his daughter. "Then, when the first leaves of Picciola show themselves, the little larvæ enclosed in the eggs will hasten to break their shells. You know, without doubt, that the buds of different plants do not open at the same time; so the eggs of different species of butterflies do not open the same day; but here a law of unity regulates the development of the plant as of the insect. If the worm appeared before the leaves, they would find nothing to feed upon; if the leaves became firm and strong before the birth of the little caterpillars, they would be unable to bite them with their feeble teeth. It could not be so — Nature never makes a mistake. Each plant in its progress keeps pace with the march of the insect that it is charged to nourish; the one opens its buds when the other breaks its eggs; and having grown and become strong together, together they unfold their flowers and their wings!"

"Picciola! Picciola!" murmured Charney, "you have not yet told me all."

Thus, in these sweet teachings, day succeeded to

day. At evening the captives, embracing each other, said adieu, and retired to their chambers to sleep, or to think, often unknown to each other, upon the same object, — the daughter of the old man. What has become of her since the order of the commandant had forcibly exiled her from the prison of her father?

Theresa had first followed the emperor to Milan; but she learned there by experience that it is sometimes more difficult to penetrate through an antechamber than through an army. However, the friends of Girhardi, excited anew by her, redoubled their efforts, and promised before long to obtain his release from captivity. Theresa, encouraged and tranquillized, returned to Turin, where a relative offered her an asylum.

The husband of that relative was librarian of the city. It was he that Menou charged with the selection of books to send to the fortress of Fenestrella. From the nature of these books, Theresa had no doubt for whom they were destined. Therefore the insertion in one of the volumes of the little note, whose mystical form prevented any danger of its compromising either her father or her *protégé*.

She did not know then that her father and Charney lived more than ever separated from each other; and when she learned it from the messenger who had been employed to convey the volumes, terrified at the effect of perhaps complete isolation upon the old man, one sole purpose filled her heart, — to ob

tain the reunion of the two captives; and she was at last made happy by its accomplishment.

Some time after, when, presented by Madame Menou to the Governor of Piedmont, she came to offer her thanks to him, and to pour out before him her gratitude, the old general, touched by her beauty, and by the unction of filial tenderness which she displayed, laid aside for a moment his ordinary harshness, and, taking her kindly by the hand, said, "Come and see me from time to time, or rather, come to see my wife. Perhaps in the course of a month I may have some good news for you."

Theresa imagined that the favor to be accorded her was, that she might return to Fenestrella, to pass part of her days in prison with her father, and threw herself at the feet of the general, thanking him again and again, with a face radiant with happiness.

On a beautiful day in October, which recalled the spring-time, Girhardi and Charney were sitting on their bench. Both, silent and pensive, were leaning on the arms at each extremity of the rustic seat. One might have thought them indifferent to each other, but that occasionally the eyes of the Count rested with an expression of interest and inquietude upon his companion, who was absorbed in a profound reverie. The countenance of Girhardi rarely assumed so sad an expression. Charney might easily be mistaken as to the cause of his sadness.

"Yes, yes," said he, suddenly breaking this long silence, "captivity is horrible, horrible! when it is

not merited. To live separated from the object of one's affection — is this life?"

Girhardi looked up, roused himself from his meditative mood, and said, —

"Separation is the great trial of life; — is it not so, my friend?"

"I your friend!" replied the Count; "do I deserve that name? Is it not I that have separated you from her? Can you forget it? Ah, do not deny it — you are thinking of your daughter, and, in thinking of her, you cannot turn your eyes towards me. I understand too well that when these thoughts come to you, the sight of me is odious to you."

"You are strangely mistaken as to the cause of my reverie," said Girhardi. "Never, perhaps, has the thought of my daughter been more full of sweetness and consolation than to-day, for she has written to me, — I have a letter from her."

"Is it possible! She has written you! they have permitted it!"

And Charney drew near the happy father with an impulse of delight; but instantly repressing it, said, "But the letter has brought you some sad news."

"No; quite the contrary."

"Then why this sadness?"

"Alas! what would you have, my friend? it is always so. A regret always mingles with our sweetest hopes. Our joys here below throw their shadow before them, and it is the shadow that first meets our eyes. You spoke of separation here is the let-

ter, read it, and you will understand why, by your side, a sentiment of sadness takes possession of me."

Charney took the letter, and held it for some time without opening it. He sat with his eyes fixed upon Girhardi, as if he would divine from the countenance of his dear companion the contents of the letter; then he examined the superscription, and recognized, with emotion, the handwriting. At last, unfolding the paper, he attempted to read it aloud; but his voice trembled, and his lips refused to utter the words. After a few sentences, he finished the letter in silence.

This is what he read: —

"My good Father, —

"Press a thousand kisses upon this letter which you hold in your hand. I have kissed it a thousand times, and there is in it a harvest for your lips to reap."

"Ah, dear child, how gladly have I done so!" murmured Girhardi.

"It is for you, as for me, an intense satisfaction, is it not? that we are permitted again to correspond. For this permission we owe General Menou eternal gratitude. It is he who has put an end to this silence, which separated us even more than the distance between us. Blessings upon him! Henceforward our thoughts, at least, can fly to each other I can tell you my hopes, and they will sustain you you can tell me your griefs, and in weeping over

them I shall feel that I am near you. But my good father, if a greater favor was reserved for us, — oh, I pray you, stop for a moment here, and prepare yourself for the sudden joy that I have to communicate. My father, if I should be once more permitted to return to you! — to see you from time to time, to hear your voice, to surround you with my care! For two years this was happiness enough for me, and then captivity seemed light to you! If this hope is realized, soon I shall reënter those walls from which I have been exiled."

"She will come! what! here? be with you?" exclaimed Charney, with a cry of joy.

"Read on, read on," replied, sadly, the old man.

Charney re-read the last phrase, and continued:

"Soon I shall reënter those walls from which I have been exiled; this makes you happy, truly happy, I am sure. Dwell a moment on this comforting thought. Your daughter, your Theresa begs it. Do not hasten to finish this letter; a too vivid emotion is sometimes dangerous. Is not what I have said sufficient for you? If an angel had descended from heaven charged to fulfil your wishes, you would not have dared to ask more. I, too exacting perhaps, before he took his flight back, should have interceded for your liberty, for your complete deliverance. At your age it is so cruel to live deprived of the sight of your native land. The banks of the Doria are so beautiful, and in your gardens of La Colline the trees planted by my dead mother and

my poor brother have grown so well. There, their memory lives more than in any other spot. Then you must so long for your friends, your friends whose generous efforts have so well aided my feeble endeavors. Oh, father, father! the pen burns my fingers — my secret is about to escape me; I have already betrayed it, without doubt. Arm yourself, I pray you, with all your strength and steadfastness, while I tell you of the happiness which awaits us. In a few days I shall rejoin you, no more to soften your captivity, but to bring it to an end; no more to be with you at stated hours, and within the walls of a prison, but to bring you away with me, free and proud! yes, proud: you will have the right to be so, for it is not mercy that your faithful friends Delarue and Cotenna have obtained for you, it is justice, reparation.

"Adieu, my good father. Oh, how much I love you and how happy I am! THERESA."

There was not in the letter one word, one single word of remembrance for Charney. This word he had sought with a pang of disappointment throughout the letter; but notwithstanding his pain at the omission, it was a cry of joy that burst from him as he finished reading.

"You will be free!" cried he; "you will repose under the shadow of green trees, and look upon the sun!"

"Yes," said the old man, "I am going — I am

going to leave you; and this is the shadow that my joy throws before it, to obscure it."

"That matters not!" replied Charney, proving by the vehemence of his delight and his generous forgetfulness of himself how worthy he had become of a friendship. "You will be restored to her at last. She will cease to suffer for my fault; you will be happy, and I shall feel no longer this terrible weight which oppresses my heart. During the little time that remains to us together we can at least speak of her."

These last words were spoken in the arms of his friend.

CHAPTER VII.

The prospect of approaching separation seemed to redouble the mutual tenderness of the two captives. Always together, they were never weary of their long and profitable conversations on the bench of conference.

There was nevertheless a certain grave subject which Girhardi attempted sometimes to broach, and which Charney avoided. The old man felt too deeply its importance to allow himself to be easily discouraged; for he felt that if he succeeded he should leave Charney with less regret.

One day the occasion to speak of it was given by Charney's saying to him, — "Do you not wonder at the chance which has brought us together here, — we who, separated from each other by birth in different lands, and having imbibed different prejudices had by different routes arrived at the same denial of the Deity?"

"On this last point I cannot agree with you," replied Girhardi, smiling; "to forget is not to deny."

"Granted; but which of us was the most blind, the most to be pitied?"

"You," said the old man without hesitation; "yes, you, my friend. All excess may lead man to ruin; but in superstition there is belief, there is passion, there is life. In incredulity there is death. The one is the river turned from its natural channel: it inundates, it submerges, it removes the fertile earth but it impregnates itself with its substance, carries it away with it, and afterwards may repair the disasters which it has caused. The other is drought, sterility. It burns, it kills; it converts the nutritious earth into sand, and of the opulent Palmyra makes a ruin in a desert! Infidelity, not content with separating us from our Creator, relaxes the bonds of society, and even those of the family; in depriving man of his dignity, it leaves him in isolation and abandonment, alone with his pride!—I have well said, a ruin in a desert!"

"Alone with his pride," murmured Charney, as he sat, his elbow resting on the arm of the seat, his head on his hand; "the pride of human knowledge! Why does man take pleasure in destroying the elements of his happiness in wishing to examine into and analyze them? Even though he owes this happiness to an untruth, why seek to raise the mask and hasten to meet the destruction of his illusions? Is truth to him so sweet? Does knowledge satisfy his desires? Fool! such was I. I am only a worm, said I then to myself, a worm destined to annihilation; but raising my head on my dunghill, I was proud of this knowledge. I disbelieved in happi

ness, in virtue, in everything good. But before annihilation, my skepticism was arrested — I believed My degradation I gloried in, because I had discovered it. And was it not a worthy subject for self-applause? In exchange for this discovery I had only given my kingly mantle, my treasure of immortality."

The old man pressed the hand of his companion, and said to him, — "The worm, after having crawled upon the ground, after having fed upon bitter leaves, after creeping through the slime of the marsh and the dust of the roads, will construct his chrysalis, a temporary coffin, from which he will only come forth transformed and purified, to fly from flower to flower and live upon their perfumes; then, spreading forth two brilliant wings, it will raise itself towards heaven. The history of the worm is ours."

Charney made a gesture of dissent.

"Unbeliever!" replied Girhardi, reproving him by a smile tinged with sadness, "you see your malady was greater than mine; its cure takes a longer time. Have you then forgotten the lessons of Picciola?"

"No," said Charney, with a grave and earnest voice; "I believe in a God! I believe now in that First Cause which Picciola has revealed to me, — in that eternal power which so wonderfully plans and rules the whole universe. But in your comparison of the worm, the immortality of man is implied, and what proof is there of that?"

"What proof?" exclaimed Girhardi, — "man's thought. It is always of the future, and carries him unceasingly forward. His life is spent in hoping and wishing; he is always turning, in spite of himself, toward this unknown pole which attracts him. Is this most glorious possession a fruit of the earth? Among what people has not a belief in the future existed? And why should not that hope be accomplished? Shall the thought of man go beyond the power of God? What proof is there? — I will not invoke the authority of revelation and the Holy Scriptures. Although convincing for me, for you they are without force, as the wind which propels the ship has no power to move the rock, for the rock has no sails to receive it. But, my friend, shall we believe in the immortality of matter, and not in the immortality of the mind which enables us to form opinions concerning matter? What! shall virtue, genius, love come to us through the affinities of certain insensible earthly molecules? Shall that which cannot think have power to make us think? Can brute matter have created intelligence, when intelligence directs and governs matter? Then the stones ought to think, ought to love. Speak, speak — answer!"

"That matter might be endowed with ideas, Locke seemed inclined to suppose." replied Charney; "but he contradicts himself, for he rejects innate ideas while admitting intuitive knowledge" — Then, interrupting himself, he said, with a laugh, — "Take care, my friend! Would you allure me again into

this labyrinth, on unstable ground, of metaphysics?"

"I understand nothing of metaphysics," said Girhardi.

"And I not much," replied Charney; "not, however, because I have not given time enough to it. But let us leave a discussion which can only be unfruitful or fatal. You are convinced; guard your convictions. I can understand that they are dear to you; I might shake them."

"You cannot do it; and I accept the contest."

"But what have you to gain by such a discussion?"

"To bring you to a belief full of consolation. You cited Locke just now; I know but one thing about him, and that is, that always, even on his death-bed, he declared that the only real happiness for man was in a pure conscience and in the hope of another life."

"I can conceive how sweet it is to pour out beforehand for one's self a draught of immortality; but my reason refuses to let me partake of it. Believe me, it is better that we should talk of it no more."

For a time both sat in a constrained silence.

Suddenly something, after circling in the air above their heads, alighted upon the plant before them. It was a greenish insect, a beautiful striped coleoptera, with white and waving bands and a narrow corselet.

"See, my friend, a diversion comes for us," said Charney. "Disclose to me yet more of the marvels of creation."

Girhardi took the insect, with certain precautions examined it carefully, paused for reflection, — then suddenly his countenance brightened as with the hope of triumph. One would have said that an irresistible argument had fallen to him from heaven. Commencing in his ordinary tone of professor, which became more and more exalted as the secret object of the lesson penetrated his discourse,

"I, the *catcher of flies*," said he, with a smile, "ought, I see, to confine myself to the department of my modest studies. I am not a learned man."

"The most enlightened, the most thoroughly furnished mind," replied Charney, "soon finds the limits of its strength and its resources in attempting to penetrate too far into the mysteries of things here below. Against these secrets, genius wears itself out, dashes itself to pieces, without extracting a spark of the true light."

"We ignorant ones," replied the old man, "go to the end by the shortest and easiest road; we simply open our eyes, and God reveals himself to us in the sublimity of his works."

"On that point we are agreed," said Charney.

"Let us then pursue our route. A plant has sufficed to make you comprehend that intelligence which governs the world; a butterfly has enabled you to catch a glimpse of the law of universal harmony; — now this pretty coleoptera, who has life and motion, and whose organization is superior to that of the butterfly, perhaps will conduct us still farther

You have yet read only one page of the immense book of Nature; I am going to turn over another leaf."

Charney drew near, and with an air of earnest attention examined the insect which the old man showed him.

"You see this little creature. With the power to create, all human genius could not add anything to his organization, so perfectly is it adapted to his need, and to the purpose for which he is created. He has wings to transport him from place to place, a shell or sheath above his wings to protect them, and defend him against injury from contact with any hard substance; his breast is provided with a cuirass, his eyes with a net-work of mail, so that neither the thorn of a rose nor the sting of an enemy shall deprive him of sight. He has antennæ, with which to interrogate obstacles that present themselves; living by the chase, he has rapid feet with which to pursue his prey, mandibles of iron with which to devour it, or to dig in the earth for a dwelling or a deposit for his booty or his eggs. If a dangerous enemy ventures to attack him he holds in reserve an acrid and corrosive fluid with which to defend himself. An instinct born with him teaches him from the first the means to provide his food, to construct his habitation, to make use of his tools and his armor. And do not think that other insects are less favored than he; all have received their share in this magnificent distribution of the gifts of Nature. The imagination is overwhelmed

in perceiving the multiplicity of means employed by Providence to insure the existence and duration of these lower ranks in creation. Now let us compare, and you will see that this frail creature suffices to establish the immense line of demarkation which separates man from the brute. Man has been thrown naked into the world, feeble, incapable of flying like the bird, running like the stag, or creeping like the serpent; without means of defence, in the midst of terrible enemies armed with claws and stings; without means to brave the inclemency of the seasons, in the midst of animals protected by fleece, by scales, by furs; without shelter, when all others have their den, their hole, their shell; without arms, when all about him are armed against him. And yet he has demanded of the lion his cave for a lodging, and the lion retires before his eye; he has despoiled the bear of his skin, and of it made his first clothing; he has plucked the horn from the bull, and this is his first drinking-cup; then he has dug even into the bowels of the earth, to seek there the instruments of his future strength; from a rib, a sinew, and a reed, he has made arms; and the eagle, who, seeing him at first in his weakness and nakedness, prepares to seize him as his prey, struck in mid-air, falls dead at his feet, only to furnish a feather to adorn his head. Among animals, is there one who under such conditions could have preserved life? Let us for a moment separate the workman from his work, God from Nature. Nature has done all for this insect, nothing

for man. It is that man should be the product of intelligence rather than of matter; and God, in granting him this celestial gift, this ray of light from the divine fire, created him feeble and unprotected, that he might make use of it, that he might be constrained to find in himself the elements of his greatness."

"But, my friend," interrupted Charney, "of what value then is this so-called divine faculty to our species? Superior to the animals in some respects, we are their inferiors in many others; and is not that insect himself, whose marvels you have just detailed to me, worthy to excite our envy and to give birth rather to a sentiment of humility than of pride?"

"No," replied Girhardi, "for the animals in the essential operations have never varied. Such as they are, such they have always been; that which they know, they have always known. If they have been born perfect, it is because there is in them no possibility of progress. They do not act from their own will, but from that which the Creator has given them. Thus, since the commencement of the world, the beavers have constructed their abode on the same plan; the worm and the spider have spun and wove their cocoon and web after the same forms; the cells of bees have always been of the regular hexagon; and the ant-lions have in all time traced without compass their circles and spirals. The character of their industry is regularity, uniformity; that of human

industry is diversity, for it is the result of free and creative thought. Judge now! Of all created beings man alone has reflection, invention, the idea of duty and of hidden causes, contemplation, enthusiasm, love. He alone determines by reason and not by instinct; he alone has any idea of the universe in its whole; he alone has the knowledge of another world; he alone knows life and death."

"Without doubt," said Charney; "but, once more, is this which distinguishes him from the animal so much for his advantage? Why has God given us a reason which misleads, knowledge which deceives us? With our high intelligence we are often objects of pity to ourselves. Why is the only privileged being the only one liable to error? Why have not we the instinct of animals, or animals our reason?"

"Because," replied Girhardi, "they are not created for the same end. God does not require from them virtues. Accord to them reason, the liberty of choice in their dwellings and their nourishment, and you destroy the equilibrium of the world. The Creator has willed that the surface of this globe, and even its depths, should be filled with animated beings, that life should be everywhere. And therefore in the plains, in the valleys, in the forests, from the summit of the mountains to the depth of the mines on the trees as on the rocks, in the seas, the lakes, the rivers, the streams. on their banks as in their beds, in the sands as in the marsh, in all climates, under all latitudes, from one pole to the other, all is

peopled, all moves with harmony, as one whole. In the depths of the desert, as on a blade of grass, the lion and the ant are each at the post which has been assigned them. Each one has his part, each one his place marked beforehand; each one moves in his appointed circle; each one is enchained within his limits; for it was necessary that each square of this immense chess-board should be filled, — and it is so, — none can depart from his place without death. Man alone goes everywhere and lives everywhere. He travels the oceans and the deserts; he plants his tent upon the sands, or constructs his palace on the borders of the sea; he lives amid the snows of the Alps, or the fervors of tropic heat; he has the world for a prison."

"But if this world is governed by God," said Charney, "why are there so many crimes in the bosom of human society, why so many disasters in nature? I admire with you the sublime distribution of created beings; my reason is overwhelmed before that mighty whole; but when my eyes turn towards man" —

"My friend," interrupted the sage, "do not accuse God of the errors of man, nor of the eruption of the volcano: he has imposed upon matter eternal laws, and his work is accomplished although a vessel founder in the storm, or a city disappear in the convulsions of an earthquake. What matter to him a few lives more or less? Does he believe in death? but to our souls he has left the care of self-govern

ment; it is proved by the independence of our passions. I have shown you the animal creation obeying the instinct which leads them, having only blind tendencies, possessing only qualities inherent in their species; man alone is the parent of his virtues and his vices; to him alone is given free will, for to him alone is this earth a place of trial. The tree of good which we cultivate with so much care here below, will only blossom in the skies. Oh! think not that God can change the heart of the wicked without doing it! that he can let the just suffer without reserving for him a reward! Why should he then have created us? If, in this world, we must receive the reward of our virtues or our crimes, all prosperity would be honorable, and a stroke of lightning would be an infamous death!"

Charney was filled with surprise in hearing this man, so simple, through his convictions become so eloquent; he watched with admiration his noble face, through which shone the beauty of his pious soul, and, notwithstanding himself, he was moved and impressed.

"But," murmured he, "why has not God given us the certainty of our future?"

"Has he willed it? Ought he to have willed it?" replied the holy man, rising with dignity, and laying his hand affectionately on the shoulder of his companion. "Uncertainty perhaps was necessary to abase the pride of our reason. What would virtue be if its reward was sure beforehand? What would

become of our free will? The mind of man is immense and not infinite; it is at the same time great and restricted: great, that it may comprehend its dignity and be enabled to rise to God in the contemplation of God in his works; restricted, that it may feel its dependence upon God. Man, here below, has only glimpses of his future; faith does the rest. My God! my God!" cried Girhardi, clasping his hands with fervor, and raising towards heaven eyes filled with tears, "give me thy strength to lift up this man who desires to find Thee! Lend me thy aid to restore to this immortal soul the wings which it knows not that it possesses! Let my words be persuasive as my heart is convinced! But why is an advocate necessary to plead the cause when all Nature brings her unanimous testimony? Is even so much necessary? A flower, an insect sufficed to proclaim thy omnipotence, and reveal to him his future destiny. Let that plant finish its work! Is it not, my God, like all thy creatures, illumined by Thee, and endowed with life by the breath that emanates from Thee?"

The old man then seemed to forget himself in silent thought; without doubt, his thoughts were prayers; and when he turned again to his companion, he found him with his hands clasped on the back of the rustic bench, his head bowed upon them, and on his countenance the expression of holy meditation.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the purified heart of Charney the blood flowed more calmly; his broader views made that heart the home of more gentle, consoling, and loving thoughts. Like the good Girhardi, he felt in his spirit the need of that expansion that comes from the sentiment of tenderness. He delighted to think of those whom he could feel were bound to him by any tie of gratitude or friendship. The Empress, Girhardi, and Ludovic were the first to people this new world then two female shadows were faintly sketched at either end of this rainbow of love, which followed the storm, as one sees in altar-pieces two seraphim with bending heads, floating robes, and wings half spread, as if to mark the limits of an Eden.

One of these shadows was the fairy of his dreams, the young maiden Picciola, that sweet image born of the perfumes of his flower; the other, the angel of his prison, his second providence, Theresa Girhardi.

By a strange inconsistency the former, which had only an ideal existence, always appeared to him under a fixed, distinct form; he could see the contraction of her brow, the sparkle of her eye, her smile

As she had appeared to him in his dream, so he had always recalled her image since. As to Theresa, — whom he had only once glanced at, and then with his brain still under the influence of his dream, — with what features could he invest his thought of her? The face of the seraph was veiled, and if Charney would forcibly lift the veil, it was always the face of Picciola that was revealed — Picciola, as it were, duplicating herself, to receive the homage destined for her rival.

One morning the prisoner, though wide awake, felt himself a prey to this singular hallucination. The day was breaking; he had already risen, and was thinking of Girhardi, whose adieus of the previous evening had breathed the most touching regret in the thought of his approaching separation from his friend. Charney, after many wakeful hours of sad anticipation, had risen, and was pacing his chamber, when, mechanically turning his eyes towards the bench of conference, where the evening before he had talked with the father, of his daughter, he saw through the gray morning fog of autumn the figure of a young girl seated on this same bench. She was alone, leaning upon the arm of the seat, and apparently contemplating the plant before her. Immediately he thought of Theresa, and of her arrival.

"It is she," said he; "I shall see her for a moment, and then never again! And my dear companion will go with her."

As he spoke, she turned her head towards him,

and the face which he saw was his ideal image of Picciola.

Astounded, he passed his hand over his brow, his eyes, his garments, the cold bars of his window, to convince himself that this time it was not a dream.

The young girl rose, advanced a few steps towards him, and, blushing and smiling, made a timid gesture of salutation. Charney replied not to the gesture nor the smile. With fixed eyes he regarded this graceful form as it crossed the court-yard; it was the same that had appeared to him as Picciola in the *fêtes* of his dreams, the same that constantly haunted his thoughts and reveries. Believing that he was attacked with the delirium of fever, he threw himself upon his bed to recover his senses.

A few minutes after, his door opened, and Ludovic entered.

"Alas! alas! good and bad news both, Signor Count," cried he. "One of my birds is going to fly, not over the walls, but by the door. So much the better for him, so much the worse for you."

"What! does he go to-day?"

"I believe not, Signor Count. However, it cannot be long delayed, for the papers have been signed in Paris, they say, and are on the way to Turin; at least the young lady told her father so before me."

"What!" cried Charney, half rising from his bed, "has she arrived? Is she here?"

"She arrived at Fenestrella last evening, with a permission, in due form, to enter the fortress, but un

fortunately the orders do not allow the drawbridge to be lowered so late for a woman; so she was obliged to put off her visit till this morning. I knew she was there, but I took good care to say nothing to the old man; he would not have closed his eyes all night, and the time would have seemed so long, if he had known his daughter was so near him. This morning she was up before the sun, and waiting in the fog at the gate of the citadel."

"But," interrupted Charney, astonished and confounded, "did she not remain some time in the court-yard, seated on the bench?"

And rushing to the window, he looked eagerly into the court, but turned again to Ludovic, saying, "She is no longer there."

"Certainly she is no longer there," replied Ludovic, "but she has been there. Yes, she rested there while I went up to prepare the good man for her visit; for one can die of joy, you know. Joy is like strong spirits: a little drop is good once in a while, but it will not do to empty the gourd at one draught. Now they are together, contented enough; and I, seeing them so happy, felt heart-broken, Signor Count, in thinking of you who will so soon be without a companion; and so I have come to remind you that Ludovic and Picciola will still be with you. She begins to lose her leaves; but that is the effect of the season; she must not be despised for that."

And he went out, without waiting for an answer from Charney.

Not yet recovered from his surprise and emotion, he sought to explain his singular vision. He decided at last that the sweet image of Picciola the young girl must have been that of Theresa, of whom he had had a glimpse through the little grated window, and that without his knowledge it was impressed upon his brain, and reproduced in his dreams.

While he was thus reasoning with himself, the murmur of two voices reached him from the stairway; in addition to the well-known step of his friend, he could distinguish a light and furtive footfall which seemed to glide over the stones, scarcely touching them. The measured sound ceased at his door. He trembled, but Girhardi entered alone.

"She is here," said he, "and awaits us near the plant."

Charney followed in silence, unable to articulate a word, his heart filled with a sort of constraint rather than pleasure.

Was it embarrassment in presenting himself before a woman to whom he owed so much and could pay nothing? Was it the remembrance of the manner in which he had received her smile and salute that morning? Was it that, as the separation approached, his courage and resignation failed? Whether it was owing to these or other causes, when he was presented to her, one would never have recognized the polished Count de Charney; the ease of the man of the world, the self-possession of the

philosopher, gave place to a confused awkwardness, to which doubtless was owing the apparent coolness and circumspection with which Theresa clothed her words and her manner.

Notwithstanding all Girhardi's efforts to bring about a pleasant relation between his daughter and his friend, the conversation for a time was only upon commonplace topics. Recovered somewhat from his first agitation, Charney saw in the calmness of Theresa's expression only indifference, and easily persuaded himself, that, in the service she had rendered him, she had only obeyed her natural love of adventure, or the wishes of her father.

He went so far as almost to regret that he had seen her, fearing to lose the charm with which in his reveries he had heretofore invested her.

While the three were seated on the bench, Girhardi gazing upon his daughter, and Charney occasionally making an indifferent remark, in a movement which Theresa made towards her father, a large medallion, suspended about her neck and hidden in her dress, escaped. Charney could see on one side the white hair of the old man, and on the other a withered flower carefully preserved under the glass. It was the flower which he had sent to her by Ludovic.

She had carefully preserved his flower, then, — treasured it with the hair of her father, whom she adored! The flower of Picciola no longer ornamented the hair of the young girl; it reposed upon her heart!

This discovery made an entire change in Charney's sentiments.

He scanned her features anew, as if she had been metamorphosed, and he might discover there what had not before been visible. Her face, turned towards the old man, was illuminated by a double expression of tenderness and serenity; she was beautiful then with the beauty of Raphael's virgins, with the beauty of a loving and pure soul. Charney gazed on this lovely profile, in which harmonized strength and sweetness, energy and modesty. It was long since he had looked upon a human face so glowing with youth, beauty, and virtue. He was intoxicated by the sight, and fixing his eyes earnestly on the medallion, murmured, "You did not then despise my poor gift?"

But, low as was the tone in which he spoke, Theresa turned quickly towards him; her first movement was to replace the locket in her dress; but she in her turn was aware of the change in the Count's expression, and as their eyes met, the blood mounted in the faces of both.

"What is the matter, my child?" said Girhardi, seeing her disturbance.

"Nothing," said she; but instantly correcting herself, as if she scorned to deny a pure and honorable sentiment, — "It is this medallion; see, my father, this is your hair;" then, turning to Charney, — "This is the flower, Monsieur, that you sent me; I have kept it, and I shall keep it forever!"

There was in her words and the sound of her voice, and in that delicate instinct which led her to address her explanation as well to her father as to the stranger, so much frankness and modesty, an expression so tender and chaste, that Charney felt himself touched as he had never been before.

The rest of the day passed in the effusions of a friendship which each minute seemed to enhance. Apart from the secret attraction which sometimes draws us to another, intimacy grows with a rapidity proportioned to the time we may have to spend with our new friend.

Charney and Theresa had never spoken to each other till to-day, but they had each thought much of the other, — and they would perhaps have so few hours together! When Charney, by an instinct of etiquette and good breeding, rose to retire, saying that after so long a separation he would leave the father and daughter alone to enjoy their happiness, she exclaimed, "Are you going?" detaining him by a look, and Girhardi by a gesture. "Are you then a stranger to my father — or to me?" added she, with a charming tone of reproach.

To convince him that his presence was no restraint upon them, she entered into the detail of all her adventures since she left Fenestrella, and the means employed by her to reunite the two captives. Having finished her recital, she begged Charney to commence his, and to relate the employment of his days, and his observations on Picciola.

He then entered upon the history of his earlier days in prison, his *ennui*, and his manual labors, the welcome appearance of his plant, and its progressive development, while Theresa with interested and intelligent questions stimulated his narrative.

Girhardi, seated between the two, holding in one hand the hand of his daughter so lately restored to him, and in the other that of the friend he was so soon to leave, listened to them both, looking first at one, then at the other, with mingled feelings of joy and sadness. But at one time the old man drew his hands together, and by the same movement those of Charney and Theresa. Then the two young people, agitated, embarrassed, with quickened heart-beats, became silent. At last the young girl, without any appearance of prudery or affectation, gently withdrew her hand, and placing it upon her father's shoulder, leaned her head carelessly upon it, in a charming manner, and smiling, turned her eyes towards Charney to invite him to continue his discourse.

Drawn on and encouraged by her ease and interest, he even went on to relate his dreams beside his plant. They were, as I have said before, the real events of his life in his solitude. He spoke of the young girl, so lovely and charming, in whom Picciola the plant was personified; and while with ardent enthusiasm he sketched the portrait, Theresa's eyes drooped, her smile faded, and her breast heaved as she listened.

The narrator took care not to name the true model of this sweet image; but finishing the history of the misfortunes of his plant, he recalled the instant when the dying Picciola, by the order of the commandant, was to be uprooted before his eyes.

"Poor Picciola!" exclaimed Theresa, with irrepressible emotion, "thou belongest also to me, dear little one, for I contributed to thy deliverance."

And Charney, transported with joy, thanked her in his heart for that adoption which established a sacred tie between them.

CHAPTER IX.

How joyfully would Charney have renounced liberty, fortune, the world, if his days might have flowed thus in prison between Theresa and her father. This young girl he loved as he had never loved before This sentiment, until now a stranger to his soul, took possession of it, — a sentiment at once violent and gentle, bitter and sweet, like an acid fruit, which, though sharp to the taste, leaves a sweet flavor in the mouth. It revealed itself to him by throbs of a new joy, by transports of a tenderness which embraced God, mankind, and all nature. His brain, his heart, his whole being seemed to dilate with the hopes, projects, and raptures which swelled within him.

The next day the three were seated in the court beside the plant; the two friends on the bench, Theresa opposite to them, on a chair which Ludovic had provided. She had brought some woman's work, a bit of embroidery; and as she bent over it, — the soft flush of happiness and satisfaction on her face, a bright and playful expression about her mouth, her head following the motion of her needle, — she occasionally raised her eyes and smiled in meeting those of her father or Charney, sometimes

throwing in a playful remark in the course of their grave discussion. At last she rose and interrupted the conversation of the two thinkers, by throwing her arms around her father and kissing his brow. The conversation was not resumed. Charney fell into deep thought.

"Is he beloved by Theresa?" In asking himself that question, two different sentiments agitated him: he feared to believe; he trembled to doubt!

She had preserved the flower he gave her, and promised to keep it always; she was agitated, the evening before, when his hand touched hers; her emotion had been evident during his recital of his impassioned dreams; but these words, spoken in a voice so tender, were said in the presence of her father. What meaning could he give to these charming evidences of pity, interest, and devotion? Had she not given him proofs of interest before this interview, before they had exchanged looks or words? Fool! madman! to believe so easily that he had found a place in that heart, so wholly filled with filial tenderness, and to mistake for the palpitations of love, the modest agitation of a maiden!

What matter? he loved her; he would always love her, and henceforth substitute for an ideal image, now insufficient, this angelic reality.

But this love must be hidden in the recesses of his own breast; to ask her to share it would be a crime. Why poison so fair a future? Does not fate decree that they shall live apart, — she, free and happy

adorning a world where she will soon find one on whom to bestow her heart, — he, alone, in prison, where he must ever live with Picciola and his eternal *souvenirs* of a few happy hours?

His resolution is taken; from this day, from this moment, he will affect indifference towards Theresa, or at least he will disguise his love in the false semblance of a calm and tranquil friendship. Woe to him, woe to both, if she loves him.

Full of this sage determination, he was aroused from his reflections by an animated discussion between Girhardi and his daughter; she insisting upon the probability that his release would be immediate, he preparing her for the possibility of the close of the year finding him still in prison.

"I know so well court delays," said he; "so little suffices to suspend justice or the good-will of men in power."

"If it is so," said the young girl, "I will return to-morrow to Turin, to hasten the execution of their promises."

"What need of so much haste?" replied her father.

"What! do you then prefer your narrow chamber and this dismal court-yard to your beautiful villa and grounds at La Colline?"

This apparent disposition of Theresa, this sort of impatience which she manifested to leave Fenestrella, ought to have been a satisfaction to Charney in proving to him that he was not beloved, and that

there was no cause to fear the danger that he had determined to avoid. However, that which should have so satisfied his prudent resolutions, on the contrary, so troubled him as to make him altogether forget the *rôle* which he had assigned himself. He neither affected indifference nor a calm and tranquil friendship. His irritation and annoyance were evident in his manner; but Theresa did not appear to notice it, except occasionally to banter him upon his silence and his coolness, and again took up the argument to prove that, if the expected decree was delayed, she ought as soon as possible to go to General Menou, and even, if necessary, to Paris, to lay the case before the Emperor.

Ordinarily so quiet and reserved, she seemed suddenly to be actuated by a spirit of loquacity and raillery.

"What is the matter with you this morning?" said her father, astonished to see her treat the subject in this way before the poor captive, whom they were so soon to leave alone.

Charney knew not what to think of her.

The truth is, that Theresa, on her side, had passed through the same train of thought as Charney. She was aware, not that love was making his entrance to her breast, but that it had long ago taken up its abode there. Like Charney, she was willing to take for herself its risks and perils, but like him she dreaded them for the one beloved. And the delight of loving, the fear of being loved, threw her into this

state of inconsistency with her own natural self, and was the cause of this incessant flow of words in which her heart sought to forget itself.

But soon, with one accord, they both ceased all these efforts, all this constraint to disguise their real sentiments. In listening to the account which Girhardi related of the many prisoners he had known, who, after their pardon had been publicly announced, waited many months for their release, they yielded themselves with delight to the sweet belief that it would be so now. One would have said, in listening to their plans and projects for the next and many following days, that this prison was to be their home for life, and that, united there with their guardian angel, the captives had but one thing to fear, — the liberation of one without the other.

The three being restored to serenity, the philosophers resumed their conversation, Theresa her embroidery and her merry interruptions.

The last rays of the sun illuminated the little court and the face of Theresa; the breeze played in her soft curls and in the folds and ribbons of her dress. Laying down her work, and raising her head, she shook back her hair and seemed to yield herself to an intoxicating draught of air, light, and happiness.

At this moment the door of the court was opened. Colonel Morand, followed by an officer and Ludovic, came to announce to Girhardi his liberation. Girhardi was to leave the fortress immediately; a carriage was in waiting outside of the gate to convey him and his daughter to Turin.

At the entrance of the commandant, Theresa had risen, but immediately sank again into her chair, and, with one glance at Charney, all color and smiles faded from her face. But Charney remained on his seat with bowed head, while they presented Girhardi with the papers which restored to him his honor and liberty.

The preparations for departure could not be long. Already Ludovic had descended from the chamber of the ex-prisoner with his trunks. The officer waited to accompany them to Turin.

The hour of separation had come.

Theresa rose again and appeared to be occupied with folding her embroidery, and putting it in her bag; then she attempted to put on her glove, but her trembling hands made it impossible.

Charney then, calling up all his resolution, went towards Girhardi and threw himself into his arms

"Adieu, my father!"

"My son! my dear son!" faltered the old man. "Have courage; count on us; — adieu, adieu!"

He pressed him again and again to his breast, and suddenly withdrawing from him, turned to Ludovic, and, to hide his emotion, gave him several useless recommendations concerning his care of him who was to be left alone. Ludovic did not reply, but gave his arm to the old man, who he saw needed support.

During this time Charney had approached Theresa, to take leave of her. Leaning with one hand

on the back of her chair, her eyes fixed on the ground, she stood thoughtful, motionless, as if nothing had been said of leaving.

When she saw Charney near her, rousing from her reverie, she looked earnestly at him for a moment without speaking. He was pale and dejected, and words failed him. Suddenly the young girl, forgetting her resolutions, extending her arms toward the captive's plant, said, "I call our Picciola to witness" — but she could articulate no more.

One of her gloves which she held in her hand fell to the ground; Charney picked it up, pressed a kiss upon it, and silently returned it to her.

Theresa took the glove, wiped with it the tears which were streaming from her eyes, and then returning it with a last smile to Charney, said, "Till we meet again," and drew her father outside the little court.

A long time had passed since the gate was closed between him and them, but Charney still sat, as if turned to stone, convulsively pressing to his heart Theresa's little glove.

CONCLUSION.

A PHILOSOPHER has said that greatness must be abandoned before it can be appreciated; he might have said it with equal truth of fortune, happiness, and all those enjoyments to which one becomes so easily habituated.

Never had the prisoner appreciated the wisdom of Girhardi, the virtues and charms of his daughter, till after the departure of his two friends. For him a profound depression succeeded to the intoxication of a few days. The efforts of Ludovic, and the care which Picciola demanded, had no power to rouse him; but at length the germs of mental and moral strength which he had derived from his studies brought forth their fruit, and the crushed man rose.

In the struggle, his soul learned new lessons.

At first he rejoiced in his solitude, which enabled him to think uninterruptedly of his absent friends; later, he saw with joy some one come to occupy the vacant seat of the wise old man.

Of his new companions, the first and the most assiduous was the chaplain of the prison, that good priest that he had once so rudely repulsed. Informed

by Ludovic of the state of melancholy into which the prisoner had fallen, he presented himself, forgetting his former treatment, and was received with gratitude by Charney.

More kindly disposed towards mankind, Charney soon came to love this one, and the rustic seat became once more the bench of conference.

The philosopher exalted the marvels of his plant and of Nature, and recounted the teachings of Girhardi; the priest, without entering into the discussion of dogmas, told him of Christ; and each became stronger in leaning upon the other.

The second visitor was the commandant of the fortress, Colonel Morand. Known better, he was a good enough man; his heart was in a military casing, that is to say, he was only hard to those in his little world, by order. He almost reconciled Charney to subordinate tyrants.

At last Charney said adieu to the priest and the Colonel. One day, when he least expected it, the prison-doors opened for him.

On his return from Austerlitz, Napoleon, importuned by Josephine, (who, in her turn, probably submitted to the importunities of another interceding for the prisoner of Fenestrella,) caused an account to be rendered to him of the seizure made by the officers in their visit of search. They brought to the Emperor the cambric manuscripts, until then deposited in the archives of the Minister of Justice. He read them over carefully, and declared loudly that

the Count of Charney was a madman, but a harmless one.

"He who can so abase his thoughts as to be absorbed in a weed," said he, "may make an excellent botanist, but not a conspirator. I grant his pardon. Let his estates be restored to him, and let him cultivate them himself if such is his good pleasure."

Charney, in his turn, left Fenestrella; but he did not go alone. Could he be separated from his first, his constant friend? After having her transplanted into a large case of good earth, he took Picciola in triumph with him; his Picciola — Picciola to whom he owed reason; Picciola to whom he owed his life; Picciola from whose bosom he had drawn consoling faith; Picciola through whom he had learned friendship and love; Picciola, in short, through whom he was to be restored to liberty!

As he was about to cross the drawbridge, a large rough hand was extended towards him.

"Signor Count," said Ludovic, trying to conceal his emotion, "give me your hand; now we can be friends, since you are going, since you leave us; since we shall see you no more — thank God! —"

Charney interrupted him, — "We shall see each other again, my dear Ludovic! Ludovic, my friend!"

And after having embraced him and pressed his hand again and again, he left the citadel.

He had crossed the esplanade, left behind him the hill on which the fortress is built, crossed the bridge over the Clusone, and turned into the road to Suza

Sonheur
Jany Canous

when a voice from the ramparts reached him, crying, "Adieu, Signor Count! adieu, Picciola!"

Six months after, one sunny day in spring, a rich equipage drew up at the gates of the prison of Fenestrella. A traveller alighted and inquired for Ludovic Ritti.

It was his former captive who came to pay a visit to his friend the jailer. A young lady leaned lovingly on the arm of the traveller. That young lady was Theresa Girhardi, Countess of Charney.

Together they visited the court, and the chamber where once abode *ennui*, scepticism, *désillusion*.

Of all the despairing sentences which had been inscribed upon the white walls, one alone remained:

"Learning, wit, beauty, youth, fortune,— all are powerless to give happiness."

Theresa added: — "without love."

The kiss which Charney pressed upon her brow gave confirmation to the truth of what she had written.

Before leaving, the Count asked Ludovic to be godfather to his first child, as he had been to Picciola. Then saying farewell, the husband and wife returned to Turin, where Girhardi awaited them in his country-seat of La Colline.

There, near the house, in a rich *parterre*, brightened and warmed by the rays of the rising sun, Charney had ordered his plant to be placed, alone, that no other might interfere with its development. By his

order, no hand but his might touch it or care for it. He alone would watch over it; it was an employment, a duty, a debt imposed upon him by his gratitude.

How rapidly the days flowed by. Surrounded by extensive grounds, on the borders of a beautiful river, under a genial sky, Charney tasted the wine of this world's happiness. Time added a new charm, new strength to all these ties; for habit, like the ivy of our walls, cements and consolidates that which it cannot destroy. The friendship of Girhardi, the love of Theresa, the blessings of all who lived under his roof, nothing was wanting to his happiness, and yet that happiness was to be made still greater. Charney became a father.

Oh, then, his heart overflowed with felicity. His tenderness for his daughter seemed to redouble that which he felt for his wife. He was never weary of gazing upon and adoring them both. To be separated a moment from them was pain.

Ludovic arrived to fulfil his promise. He wished to visit his first godchild, that of the prison. But, alas! in the midst of these transports of love, of the prosperity and happiness with which La Colline abounded, the source of all these joys, of all this happiness, *la povera Picciola* was dead, — dead for want of care!

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 09946 151 7